

Meetings with R. Murray Schafer: Composer, educator and founder of Soundscape Studies

By Laura De Caro and Carlotta Daró

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LAURA DE CARO: Mr. Schafer, what were your primary objectives when you wrote *The Tuning of the World*? You claim at the beginning of the book that your work is essentially lyrical in character, yet you state elsewhere that acoustic design can only be effective if it assumes a political and social responsibility. Was it also your intention to make a political statement?

R. MURRAY SCHAFFER: Oh I think so, yes. When I wrote *The Tuning of the World*, I was in university, teaching in a Communication department. I was expected to do some research and it had to be an objective sort of approach to a new subject, soundscape, which no one had researched at that time. I actually had to invent new words to describe what I was going to study. At the same time, I was giving anti-noise workshops in the Vancouver area, because I was a member of the Citizens Committee against noise.

The 1960s were a very noisy decade. Just think of the developments that were happening in the 1960s: rock music was being played for the first time at volumes that were much louder than any music known before; the commercial jet aircraft had just come in and the noise profile around airports had grown larger. There was a lot of concern about noise pollution. But what I wanted to try to do was to expand the subject so that we would not just be concerned with ugly noises but with all the sounds of the environment. That is because when you are concerned with all the sounds of the environment, the noises become more conspicuous.

I taught a course in noise pollution at Simon Fraser University, but the students found it too negative. They would say to me “Well it is a noisy world, we agree but what can we do about it?” It was then that I decided to change the subject of the course to all the sounds of the environment. Students could choose what area they wanted to study and that was much more interesting for them. They started to think about the changes in the soundscape and interviewed people about the sounds of their environment. They were very interested in history and sociology. It gave us more opportunities for research.

LC: I wanted to ask you what you thought about some of the things your critics have mentioned. One such criticism concerns the fact that you tried to find a new vocabulary for sonic perception but that you eventually adopted a correspondent vocabulary related to the field of vision. Is it possible to create a terminology that is strictly related to sonic experiences or do you find it effective to apply terminology that comes from the visual world? Should perception be considered more globally?

RMS: You had to invent some new terms, some could come from sound, some from music and some from the visual world. But the

important thing is that unless you have a word to describe something, it probably doesn't exist. You could say that the soundscape concept didn't exist until it was given a name. Through history, while people wrote about sounds, they didn't really have a concept of sound as an abstract medium of study. The same thing is true of landscape. They say in fact, that landscape only came into existence when Petrarch climbed on top of a mountain and looked around to describe what he saw. Of course people would stand and look at a scene, but they didn't have a word for it. So it didn't really occur as a specific human activity and it certainly didn't exist as a concept until painters began to paint what they saw. We have to think that in certain societies there will be a larger vocabulary to describe sounds. But there may not be a word to describe everything that you hear during your entire lifetime. That's the soundscape.

LC: Critics have pointed out the recurring tendency in *The Tuning of the World* to make no distinction between what results from perception and what results from imaginative and interpretative processes. According to the Italian philosopher of music Carlo Serra, for example, the perspective presented in *The Tuning of the World* does not take into account the interpretative potential of the individual, advocating a rather passive form of listening. How would you respond?

RMS: There may be something in that. We were not so much concerned with making a distinction between perception, imagination and memory. What we were trying to do was to get people to describe the sounds of the environment and get some idea of what they thought about them: whether they were useful, whether they were irritating or pleasant, what kinds of function those sounds had. We were gathering information in order to try and fill in periods of the soundscape that had never been documented before.

The only information we have on sounds prior to the tape recorder are the descriptions of how people heard those sounds. Some critics have said this is an imaginative approach, but if I want to find out what kinds of sounds were heard in the Middle Ages or in Roman times, the only way I can do that is by reading and writing down all the accounts that I have. This way I can find out what people listened to and what they thought about it.

LC: While some critics try to extrapolate a theory from *The Tuning of the World*, Albert Mayr¹ suggests that the work of WSP during the 1960s and 1970s was not primarily concerned with developing a scientific approach, but with recording and seeing what that brought.

¹ Personal communication.

Carlotta Daró Talks to R. Murray Schafer, July 2008

CARLOTTA DARÓ: Who are the figures that mostly inspired you to develop the notion of soundscape in 1969?

RMS: Three persons are on the base to understand the birth of this concept. The first is Pierre Schaeffer, who I met in Europe during my stay (1956–61). I was strongly interested on his work because, as composer, he had a particular background. He was an engineer in telecommunication working in the *Radiodiffusion Télévision Française* (RTF). His idea of 'musique concrète' (1949) was first issued from experiments with recorded sounds. At this time the electro-acoustic manipulation of sound was a new territory to explore for technology and acoustic science, but Schaeffer started very soon to elevate this practice to "music".

The second one was for sure John Cage for the way he turned upside down the social conventions of the traditionally-settled rituals of concert, music and listening. I invited him the first year I was teaching at the Simon Fraser University, in 1965. He was doing a tour with the Merce Cunningham dance company and he came to give a lecture. The University was just opened and they were looking for people to increase the cultural prestigious of this new institution, especially coming from United States. But they were really disappointed. Cage did a lecture without any contents or particular conclusions and when the audience started to ask questions he just played his game card as he often did. He used to have a game card of papers with written sentences and choose randomly one of them to read as an answer. People from University were angry with me because I invited him. Anyway, he was really nice to me, he quickly understood the work I was doing on soundscape

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RMS: That's probably true. You have to remember that it was the very first time that anyone had gone out and recorded the environment. Before that, all the recordings that had been done, by broadcasters and researchers had been done in a studio. Even ornithologists went out and only recorded bird song. So our environmental recordings are significant as the first document of the *other* sounds in the environment, that no one had ever bothered to pay any attention to. I would call the recording approach phenomenological, because in many cases we were not trying to direct the microphone towards a particular sound. We would not manipulate the sounds in the way that, for example, a broadcaster would. The broadcaster points the microphone at the sounds that he wants, like anyone who wants to record particular sounds like birds or animals. They're searching for particular things. We set out our microphones in an environment and recorded what was there. Then we tried to analyze what was on the recording.

LC: In *Five Village Soundscapes* you make use of musical notation to represent the sounds heard, while in *The Tuning of the World* you make the *keynote* one of the central tools for the description of the soundscape. If we use the term *keynote* to denote hierarchical relations between sounds in music, can we apply it in its full meaning to the context of environmental sound? More generally, do you think musical categories can be effectively applied to describe the soundscape for analytical purposes, or do they intend to work as 'aural metaphors'?

RMS: First of all, not all terminology comes from music. Ear witness, for example, comes from eyewitness. Everybody up until that time had been gathering eyewitness information, but no one had ever tried asking people about the sounds they heard: how sounds had changed during their lifetime, what they thought about them and so forth. Certainly sounds can be indicated in musical terms. Some sounds have a definite pitch and a definite rhythm. They can be indicated quite accurately in musical terminology. Other, more complex sounds, cannot be indicated in the same way. This is why we have graphic analysis to show other aspects of sound, like the frequency or the duration of the sound.

But if your question is if one thing is a replacement for the other, the answer is no, it isn't. It's a useful aid for study, an alternative way of describing, but it's not the same thing at all. You could look at a graph of a sound of a very large explosion and all you would get is little black dots! You wouldn't have the impact or the sensation of being next to the bomb that just went off. That's why I think we wanted to make some recordings to include with the publications, to have the actual sound. You don't get the volume, the context, you don't get other things, but you get some impression.

LC: Your critics have pointed out the need for a more structured methodology in *The Tuning of the World*. Maybe because *The Tuning of the World* was the only one of your books to be translated into other languages and to have reached Europe in those days, it was judged not as the result of a work in progress and on the field, but as the presentation of a new discipline that needed a stronger base. There appears to be a substantial rejection of the experimental nature of your work.

RMS: I remember when I was trying to get grants to study the soundscape, to go cross Canada and to come to Europe for *Five Village Soundscapes*, always there was a jury and always the jury would say 'you don't have a methodology'. Yet no one can say today that there isn't a methodology. It may need to be refined, you could criticize some aspects, but there are a lot of projects going on and they seem to be getting funding too.



Photo: Carlotta Daró

What I feel is not helping us very much is that many of the people that are connected with the soundscape movement are doing environmental music. We made those recordings as *documents* of actual sounds. I'm not drawing conclusions onto why there are more voices in Cembra than in Skruv, but we made those documents for further research and reflection. There are a lot of people who are taking that material and manipulating it.

LC: In relation to the idea of 'sonic naturalism' that Michel Chion has attributed to your work, do you see a direct relation between the physical characteristics of sound and its meaning, or is the construction of meaning exclusively cultural?

RMS: It's social and cultural too, because if I came to Turin and I was to stand on the corner of a street, I would hear differently from you. You would hear the sounds that you know and you would know how to place them in a certain context. I would be a tourist and I wouldn't know how to put them in a particular context unless you explain them to me. What is this horn that I'm hearing? What is this bell that I'm hearing? I need to ask questions.

In order to understand sound you very often have to interview people who understand it more than you do. When we went on our Five Village study we had to ask people a lot of questions that for them were natural about sounds they had lived with all their lives. But for us, they were absolutely new and different. The soundscape is not a neutral thing that we all experience; the soundscape needs to be interpreted by the listener. It has to be described and one person's description will be very different from another person's description.

I think most people have an enormous reservoir of sounds in their lives that they would find very difficult to describe or focus on in isolation. Altogether their surrounding soundscape makes it possible for them to navigate that soundscape comfortably, to know what is a dangerous sound or a pleasant sound. People feel comfortable in their own soundscape just as they feel comfortable in their own environment, town, or home. That's a very different attitude from the attitude of the researcher who comes in from outside. For instance, it would have been better for a group of Italian researchers to have researched Cembra instead of a group of Canadians who didn't know the language or the history of the place and had trouble talking to the local people. Yet it was not our intention to focus on a specific community in detail or to understand the Italian attitude to the soundscape; our intention was to gather enough information for comparison. We wanted to compare five villages of approximately the same size, in five different countries.

LC: Do you think research in acoustic ecology could not only focus on community soundscapes but on smaller nuclei like groups, social gatherings or media-defined soundscapes? Would reduced objects of study help create direct links between individual interpretation and community-based processes of construction of meaning, with regards to sonic experiences?

RMS: Yes, it would definitely be a good idea to do some research on smaller groups of people working closer together, a linguistic community or foreigners living in a new environment. The World Soundscape Project – what an ambitious title! We couldn't possibly be researching the world! We had to choose what groups we were going to study. Unlike the city of Vancouver, Five Villages gave us a smaller setting where we could get a better impression of what unified it as a sonic environment.

LC: Mr. Schafer, your critics have read your ecological approach as a strong denunciation of what we call progress and technology. What was your position towards technology when you first

started working on soundscape? Did it change during your work on the soundscape and how do you feel about this issue today? Do you think that technology has succeeded in providing a more balanced soundscape?

RMS: Yes, I think it did change. When I was young I was in love with technology. Many young people are. I wanted to have the best electronic music studio with all the latest equipment. In fact, when I first went to Simon Fraser University in 1965, the university had just been created. So I was able to buy the best equipment that was available and for a few years we had the best electronic music studio and sonic research studio than probably anywhere in North America. But with technology, you need to keep adding new equipment as things change and that became more difficult. By the time I left university ten years later, I felt I didn't need to have that technology in my life – it was very time consuming and very energy consuming to keep these studios equipped in the very best way.

Secondly, one of the models in my thinking has always been the Bauhaus. There were many painters and architects that worked there and they made a major discovery, industrial design. The Bauhaus had a motto, "more is less:" you can think of that in terms of architecture, like in baroque architecture, where there's a lot of activity, a lot of delicate stonework that you can't appreciate all at once. That is "less" than a good, clean line, a good clean shape or façade. So I began to think about that and realized that having more and more elaborate equipment was not necessary, it was not the best way *for me* to go.

By 1970 we were beginning to do soundscape research. I started out with an electronic music studio, with a lot of computer equipment. But soon we were finding the students wanted to go to Princeton or to California, where they had the best opportunities to have the latest equipment. So I had to think of "what are we going to do that is going to be important?" and I think that's when we started working on soundscape research. The studio then changed and became more of a research studio.

LC: The *hi-fi* and *lo-fi* dichotomy has been interpreted by critics as the opposition between a more balanced soundscape of the past, which retains the qualities of interaction between man and environment, and today's *lo-fi* environments, that confuse our ability to receive information from the soundscape. Can you comment on the use of such terms?

RMS: The word *hi-fi* was used by the technology enthusiasts in the recording industry in 1960, when *hi-fi* recording came into existence. It was a word that everybody was using. I decided to invent *lo-fi*, which was rather amusing, rather funny. What one meant by *hi-fi* was a recording that had a good signal-to-noise ratio. The signal was very clear and the noise was kept to an absolute minimum. So a *lo-fi* environment or sound would be one in which the noise is very prevalent and the signal is not very clear. It was very useful to me to explain to people in lectures what had happened to the urban soundscape: the noises were so loud, so dominating, that it made it very difficult for us to hear the sounds we wanted to hear. Whereas if you go out into the country, it's generally much quieter and you can hear the signals clearly. You can hear the birds on a summer morning in the country. I would call that a *hi-fi* environment because the sounds of the birds are very clear but the other sounds are minimal. I used those words deliberately to describe two different kinds of environment.

You could also say though, that the countryside can sometimes be a *lo-fi* environment. Even the sounds of the birds can constitute a *lo-fi* environment if they are covering up a sound that you want to hear.

LC: Yes, I suppose they weren't considered as relative terms, but as a clear cut opposition between the urban context and the natural context.

RMS: I used them that way, because I was trying to explain to people in cities that they had a problem they should recognize and that it was called noise pollution. It was political, I was using those terms to try and explain. It was educational, but also political, because I was trying to get people to complain more about noise.

LC: What relevance does schizophonia have today and in what ways do you think a soundscape researcher should make use of such concept?

RMS: I invented the word schizophonia, from schizophrenia. The idea is that of split sounds, just like schizophrenia is a split personality. I wanted people to understand that there is a difference between a sound that comes from a human being, or any animal, which is original and can only come from that person. It cannot be duplicated by anything else nor anyone else, not exactly in any case. In a radio broadcast in which a man or a woman sit in a studio and talk into a microphone, their voice is multiplied a million times. You're creating a million times the amount of disturbance with one voice on television than with your own single voice. I wanted people to realize that that multiplication of sound was a problem in the modern world, where we already have enough sounds. To add more sound to the environment made it impossible to find a quiet place in the city where you could simply sit and meditate. I was using these words to inform people and get them to think about their own environment.

I should emphasize that in addition to teaching in university I was doing a lot of lecturing in public forums. It was the era in which ecology had just come into existence. No one had heard about that before. So people were concerned about the environment, concerned about the destruction of the environment in the 1960s and the 1970s because, as I said before, it was probably the noisiest time in Western history. That's when all the big noises were really invented. I did a lot of talking to just ordinary people in gatherings concerned with pollution and ecology and I had to invent a vocabulary that they would understand. It was not so much invented for academics, but for ordinary people so that they could understand. I used terms they were familiar with, like hi-fi or schizophrenia.

LC: Do you feel soundscape studies have succeeded in creating an interdisciplinary research environment?

RMS: Indeed, if you look at the essays of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, you'll see that they come from many different disciplines. It's not just acoustics or music or architecture. The influence is interdisciplinary, there's no doubt about it.

LC: It seems though that while there is an interest in different disciplines, researchers tend to apply the soundscape concept within their own discipline instead of working together.

RMS: You're right, it would be better to have one school, for example, that wanted to go into that direction. I think we had the chance to do that when I was at Simon Fraser University.

LC: Old and new media, along with motorized transport, have extended our individual soundscape to a global scale, while contributing in breaking some of the ties between the individual and the local acoustic dimension. Aural and visual experiences are increasingly mediated, and as your Preference Tests on school children have pointed out, it has become increasingly difficult

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and he talked about it to other people to try to develop this project.

Another very important person was Marshall McLuhan. His approach to communication studies was based on the rule of senses. In particular, he thought that aural sense was necessary to understand the media revolution that was happening around us during 1960s and 1970s. He supported the soundscape project and helped to diffuse it. He helped to link many people and our work. As you know, he was a very charismatic and media-friendly man even if in some contexts he wasn't really appreciated, especially in the academic world, and was later in the University of Toronto where we actually are and where he taught.

When I wrote *The Tuning of the World* McLuhan thought this was a wonderful book because it validated many of his opinions, his thinking and teaching. It was an endorsement of what he was saying about communication changes. He used to say to me that the world has become audile and tactile. He was of great support when *The Tuning of the World* was written. He certainly talked about it in many of his own lectures. When he was talking about communication, it was a new subject in North America. Nobody had really talked about those things before he and Harold Innis began to. When we began to talk about acoustic communication and the soundscape, no one had talked about that before either.

CD: So, McLuhan was sensitive to the aural sense ?

RMS: Yes it's true. He was much more interested in the aural than visual sense. Visual medias – especially writing – were for him no longer useful in modern communication; they were the tools from an era that was being overtaken. Aural media was by contrast the appropriate system for communication. When he said 'the medium is the message' he wanted to signify that the choice of media designate the time and the society where we live more than the content of the message itself. Don't forget that he was influenced by Harold Innis who was teaching at the same University, just before him. There was already activity here in this field of communication. In a way, McLuhan developed ideas from Innis and made them more contemporary. Then, McLuhan became very popular because of the way he was a media-friendly man. He was very good for the way he communicated his thoughts, his answers were always unexpected and pronounced like a kind of aphorism. University people didn't like the way he was looking for success outside the academic world, especially in the press, so they were resistant to him. But outside, for artists and others, he was really important: a contemporary reference. You know, when Cage came here the only person he wanted to see was Marshall McLuhan.

CD: What role did technology play in the creation of the WSP? Was the use of technology a support for your ecological intentions? And what is your relation with that now?

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RMS: At the beginning I was really interested in using sound technology and that's why the engineering background of Pierre Schaeffer, for instance, fascinated me. I think that at the time of WSP we were the first to operate phenomenological recording. We did a lot of 24-hour recordings, just leaving the microphone in a place, in the environment, and then come back to listen and observe the results. Before that, microphone was used inside radio and recording studios, basically in closed spaces. It is true that our use of technology wasn't active and wasn't creative: it was just analytic. In a way, it was an ecological way to use technology. For me this practice was completely separate from music. Today many composers use recorded sounds in their music and they call it soundscape. It is no longer a practice involving in research, but you can't have the control of the way a word is employed, even if you invented it. Anyway, I have to say that I have never been a specialist in technology, in a practical way. In the WSP others people were in charge of it; for me it was just a tool to reach results. Today, I don't need to be involved in the progress of technology (internet, electronic mail) but it is not an ideological position. Maybe it is just a way to feel myself more independent, like leaving the academic world, having my own publisher, living in the countryside.

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to discern between mediated and unmediated perceptual experience. Yet soundscape theory seems to focus on direct, unmediated experience. How does acoustic ecology find its place today?

RMS: I think, first of all, acoustic ecology protects us from destroying our hearing. I think it should be part of the education of every human being, just like we get health education or we go to school. We have generations of people who have destroyed their hearing. This is very common and very well known. So I think that acoustic ecology is trying to remind people that you have to keep a balance between loud sounds and quiet times. Probably it wouldn't do any harm to people to introduce quiet times into their lives. In all religions there are quiet times. I think we need to rediscover that. People have renounced religion, they don't want to go to church anymore, they don't want to do the things their parents and grandparents did. But I think we should still have *temples of silence* somewhere in our lives. A place where to meditate, where to be quiet, and these could be public places. This is part of what I would call acoustic design. The acoustic design of the future could include places where you could just go and sit quietly and try to recompose yourself. It doesn't have to be religious. That could become part of the architecture of the future. So ultimately acoustic ecology leads to acoustic design.

It seeks the means to design environments of the future that will help us maintain our sanity and live lives that are full of rich and intense experiences but that will also allow us to live in quiet environments where we can recover. There are countries, like Japan for instance, where we just had our Forum for Acoustic Ecology, which impressed me a great deal. The Japanese are quite concerned with acoustic design and quiet environments, probably more than any other country that I know of.

Gradually soundscape concepts are beginning to influence designers and architects. I think that's a good sign. What will change the world is when we actually start to rebuild our cities, so that we can have a more rich and contrasted acoustic environment. The mayor of London has just introduced a new project called *The Sounder City*, to include soundscape in urban planning. These initiatives are



the ultimate reward for the original work of the 1960s and 1970s. I always intended the work not just to be discussed. Our research objective was not just to analyze the situation, but to recommend changes. It's great to see some people paying attention to these recommendations. Whether they agree with me on every term, I don't think it matters.

LAURA DE CARO has an MA in Communication and Media Studies from the University of Turin, Italy. Following her master's thesis on the development of Soundscape Studies, she is currently pursuing her interest in soundscape, the relationship between the senses and the urban environment and its implications for museum space.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

'Ideologies and Ethics in the Uses and Abuses of Sound'

International Conference of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, Koli, Finland June 15–19, 2010

The 2010 WFAE conference will be held at Koli in Eastern Finland. Koli is a plausible site for reflecting upon ideologies, ethics and soundscapes, since it was amongst the key places of the national romantic artist pilgrims in the late 19th century Finland. The Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology (FSAE) invites researchers and artists from all disciplines to join this forum of discussion.

Proposals are invited for papers, workshops, roundtable, or artistic contributions relating to, but not limited to the following topics:

NATIONS, NATIONALISM AND SOUNDSCAPE

There has been an abundance of research on the topic of nationalism and music. What about nationalism and soundscape?

WITHIN SOUND OF RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Martin Stokes mentioned recently that in order to understand certain Islamic movements today it would be crucial to understand their soundscapes. Collective listening or giving 'voices' to subjects and their religious experiences, are some examples.

CONSTRUCTING PAST AND PROGRESS IN THE USES AND ABUSES OF SOUND

Both past and progress can be used and abused as part of many ideologies. Have past soundscapes been used as a resource as part of these negotiations? The ideology of progress, then, is intimately related to the acceptance of noise as an inevitable phenomenon.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITH THE SOUNDS

How do soundscape researchers and artists answer to the ethical challenges of working with the sounds of other people – and of themselves. How do we understand cultural convergences, differences and sameness? Or would it just be more important to learn to tolerate the other? Should the researcher or artist make an intervention – or would it be best just to observe the uses and abuses of sounds from outside?

THE COMMODIFICATION OF AURAL SPACE, SOUND AND SILENCE

How does silence, its commodification and tourism fit under the same sky? What kind of strategies can citizens and planners develop in different localities in order to guarantee soundscape comfort, tourism as a means of livelihood and the touristic search of silence all at the same time? What about the urban environment with its ubiquitous transphonic phenomena? Who has the right to fill the urban space with music, and how is it currently happening?

Please send ABSTRACTS (max. 400 words) to the FSAE by October 1, 2009 to the email address koli@akueko.com. A web page will be opened giving more information about the program and accommodation (which will be a broad range from a hostel, cottages to a hotel). After the official program a trip will be organised across the border to Russia, to the beautiful monastery island Old Valamo with its famous bells.

International Association for Cultural Studies in Architecture (IACSA)

We are happy to announce that on September 17, 2008, the International Association for Cultural Studies in Architecture (IACSA) was founded in Zürich (Switzerland). IACSA is a non-profit organisation with free membership. It is committed to the study and practise of cultural lifeworlds in the built environment. It addresses scholars of all disciplines – scientific, practical and artistic – prone to contribute to an understanding of the creation and appropriation of built environment.

IACSA is an association according to Swiss law, founded on September 17, 2008. The association preserves the name «Cultural Studies in Architecture» from the prospective research institution «Centre for Cultural Studies in Architecture» at the ETH Wohnforum, Department of Architecture at the ETH Zürich, from 2006 to 2008. Its scientific director was anthropologist Johanna Rolshoven. The project was abandoned by August 1, 2008. In practical terms and pragmatically the association has:

(I) A Founding Advisors' Board a group of personalities from different disciplines whose names stand for the field of Cultural Studies in Architecture.

(II) A Working Board which is open for everyone interested and willing to contribute to build the network.

(III) A Network Editor who maintains and stimulates exchange and prepares the information management.

Members of the Founding Advisors' Board (in alphabetical order):

Prof. Pauline von Bonsdorff PhD, Jyväskylä
Finland

Prof. Dr. Ingrid Breckner, Hamburg,
Germany

Prof. Catharina Dyrssen, Göteborg, Sweden

Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch, Graz,
Austria

Prof. Angela McRobbie PhD, London, United
Kingdom

Prof. Colette Pétonnet, Paris, France

Founding members, first members of the Working Board: Lea Haller, Zürich; Gabriela Muri, Zürich; Johanna Rolshoven, Marburg; Friedemann Schmoll, Tübingen; Justin Winkler (Network Editor), Basel

Everyone interested in Cultural studies in architecture can become member of the Working Board. No fee is collected, yet the members are expected to contribute to the qualitative extension of the network. IACSA shall grow more in density than in size. The association is to be put in motion by network efforts on all three levels (I–III), but especially by the network editor and the working board members.

As it starts without membership fees, the basis of IACSA is volunteer work. As it evolves, the association learns which needs have to be considered and satisfied. For some time to come, the association exists merely through intelligent «flashes» of electronic communication and serendipity. For practical reasons the language for all IACSA transactions is English only. References to projects and events in other languages are very welcome, but should be complemented by English summaries.

The IACSA Newsletter is the first and essential communicational link between the members of the Working Board. It collects and lists periodically all issues and sends it to all members. The newsletter exists exclusively in electronic form. The establishment of a website, journal, conferences and book publications – the cherished projects of most associations like this – shall be achieved later, on the basis of future network capital.

If you sense that the idea of IACSA covers the field of your interest you are welcome to participate as a member of the Working Board. Simply write to iacsa@mobileculturestudies.com an informal demand. You will receive an electronic registration form along with an electronic copy of the bylaws. You are free to ask any question concerning IACSA which we will answer within the bounds of our capacities.

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