

Sound Studies and Sonic Arts

Summer Term 2026

Phase Focus

Module Theory

Course Title **Sound and Vision** | Seminar

Course Times and Location Thursdays | 3 – 7 pm | LIE 314

Instructors [Jan Thoben](#)

Email thoben@udk-berlin.de

Office Hours and Location upon request, LIE 312

Possible Credit Points Theory 2CP/4CP (G), Free Focus 2CP/4CP (NG)

Course Description

In this seminar, we will explore the aesthetic relationships between sound and vision. In a broad historical overview, we will investigate audiovisuality by referencing exemplary theories, artistic practices, and customized instruments. Associations between color and musical pitch are among the earliest audiovisual correspondence systems and led to the construction of numerous color organs beginning in the 18th century. Since the beginning of the 20th century, modern music and abstract painting/film developed an interest in structural analogies between sound and image. In the second half of the 20th century, these analogies were further established in composition and abstract/structural film. At the same time, media arts explored transformations between sound and image, ranging from experimentation in sound film, solar sound, oscillographic imagery, and video to more contemporary digital sonification and visualization techniques. The aim of the seminar is to familiarize ourselves with different intermedia art forms, transformation strategies, and the relationship between eye and ear. During the course of the seminar, we will not only engage with the history of audiovisual media theoretically, but also – with a media-archaeological focus – explore and reenact experimental setups that transform sound and image/light, such as Chladni figures, optical sound film devices using photodiodes, and video synthesizers.

Requirements for attending

It is recommended, but not required, to also take part in the [AV] seminars. The seminars will have a joint session on May 21st, 2026 (see schedule).

Max. 12 students

Exam / Credit Points

2CP (graded: Theory; not graded: Free Focus): Regular attendance and presentation in class

Consecutive assignment leading to a total of 4CP for the course (optional, graded: Theory, grading: mean of both grades; not graded: Free Focus): written term paper (5,000 words) due 1 Nov 2026.

OR

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Consecutive assignment leading to a total of 4CP for the course (optional, graded: Theory, grading: mean of both grades): audio/video paper + 2,500 words text, due 1 Nov 2026.

Schedule

16 April 2026 - Introduction

The first session provides an overview of the topics and materials listed below. Together, we will structure the seminar schedule, selecting from this material according to the students' preferences.

Preparatory reading for this session:

Introductions and Prologue from **Daniels**, Dieter, and Sandra Naumann, eds. *Audiovisuology: See This Sound*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015, 5-16 and 439-459.

30 April 2026 - Color Organs and Waveforms

Jewanski, Jörg. "Color-Tone Analogies: A Systematic Presentation of the Principles of Correspondence." In *See this Sound: Audiovisuology: A Reader*, edited by Dieter Daniels and Sandra Naumann, 338-347. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015.

Jewanski, Jörg. "Color Organs: From the Clavecin Oculaire to Autonomous Light Kinetics", in Daniels, Dieter, and Sandra Naumann, eds. *See this Sound: Audiovisuology: A Reader*. 2. edition, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015, 76-87.

Lenoir, Timothy. "Helmholtz and the Materialities of Communication." *OSIRIS* 9 (1994): 185-207.

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/TimLenoir/HelmholtzMaterialities.pdf>

Pantalony, David. *Altered Sensations. Rudolph Koenig's Acoustical Workshop in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. London/ New York: Springer, 2009, 37-50.

Peacock, Kenneth. "Instruments to Perform Color-Music: Two Centuries of Technological Exploration." In *Leonardo* 21, no.4 (1988): 397-406. <http://rhythmiclight.com/articles/InstrumentsToPerformColor.pdf>

Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, 35-51.

21 May 2026 - Structural Analogies: Musicality and Rhythm in Abstract Film

Viking Eggeling, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann, Peter Kubelka, Tony Conrad

Richter, Hans. "Easel-Scroll-Film." *Magazine of Art* (February 1952): 78-86. http://www.evl.uic.edu/datsoupi/502/2_EaselScrollFilm_HansRichter.pdf

Schwierin, Marcel and Sandra Naumann "The Musicality of Abstract Film." In *See this Sound: Audiovisuology: A Reader*, edited by Dieter Daniels and Sandra Naumann, 18-31. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015.

Hamlyn, Nicky. "Peter Kubelka's Arnulf Rainer." In *Avant-Garde Film*, edited by Alexander Graf and Dietrich Scheunemann, 249-260, Amsterdam/ New York, NY: 2007.

Jewanski, Jörg and Sandra Naumann. „Structural Analogies Between Music and the Visual Arts.“ In *See this Sound: Audiovisuology: A Reader*, edited by Dieter Daniels and Sandra Naumann, 388-399. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015.

Joseph, Branden W. *Beyond the Dream Syndicate. Tony Conrad and the Arts after Cage*, New York: Zone Books, 2008. 279-315.

Kubelka, Peter. "The Theory of Metrical Film." In *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, edited by P. Adams Sitney, 139-159, New York: Film Culture/New York University Press 1978.

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28 May 2026 – Optical Sound

I) Oskar Fischinger, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Yevgeni Sholpo, Norman McLaren, Lis Rhodes, Guy Sherwin

Ball, Stephen. "Conditions of Music: Contemporary Audio-Visual Spatial Performance Practice." In *Expanded Cinema: Art Performance Film*, edited by Duncan White, A.L. Rees, David Curtis, Steven Ball, 267-275 London: Tate Publishing, 2011.

Connor, Steven. "Photophonics." Talk at Audiovisuality Conference, University of Aarhus, 27 May 2011, <http://www.stevenconnor.com/photophonics/>

Cox, Christoph. "Lost in Translation: Sound in the Discourse of Synaesthesia." *Artforum* (October 2005): 236-41. <http://www.artforum.com/inprint/id=9502>

Levin, Thomas. "'Tones from out of Nowhere': Rudolph Pfenninger and the Archaeology of Synthetic Sound." *Grey Room* 12 (Summer 2003): 32-79. www.centerforvisualmusic.org/LevinPfen.pdf

Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo. "Production-Reproduction (1922)." In *Moholy-Nagy*, edited by K. Passuth, 289-290, London: Thames and Hudson, 1985.

———. "Problems of the Modern Film (1928-1930)." In *Moholy-Nagy*, 311-315.

———. "New Film Experiments (1933)." In *Moholy-Nagy*, 319-323.

———. *Vision in Motion*, (1947) Chicago 1965. (Chapter "Soundfilm": 276-277)

Rhodes, Lis. "Light Music." In *The Tanks Programme Notes*, 7-9, London: Tate Publishing, October 2012.

Russett, Robert and Cecile Starr. *Experimental Animation. Origins of a New Art*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1976. 163-77.

Sherwin, Guy. *Optical Sound Films 1971 2007*, London: Lux, 2007. Booklet accompanying DVD.

Smirnov, Andrey. *Sound in Z. Experiments in Sound and Electronic Music in Early 20th Century Russia*, Cologne: Walter König, 2013. 175-236.

Zinman, Gregory. "Eradicating the Psychic Space Between Eye and Ear: Synthetic Film Sound's Challenge to the Index", *Animation Journal* 20 (2012): 51-85.

II) Frederic Rzewski/ David Behrman, Alvin Lucier, Joe Jones, Tilman Küntzel, Maria Blondeel

Bell, Alexander Graham. "On the Production and Reproduction of Sound by Light." *American Journal of Science* 20 (1880): 305-324.

Blondeel, Maria. "An Artistic Sonic Mobile Mapping System." *kunsttexte auditive perspektiven* 2 (2013), 9 pages. <http://www.kunsttexte.de/2013-2/blondeel-maria-8/PDF/blondeel.pdf>

Christiansen, Henning, "Following the Sun. Joe Jones: Solar Music. Nature as Musician." In *Joe Jones. Music Machines from the Sixties until Now*, Exhibition Catalogue DAAD Berlin, 1990, unpagged

Lucier, Alvin. "Origins of a Form: Acoustical Exploration, Science and Incessancy." *Leonardo Music Journal* 8, Ghosts and Monsters: Technology and Personality in Contemporary Music (1998): 5-11.

Margolin, Arthur and Alvin Lucier. "Conversation with Alvin Lucier." *Perspectives of New Music* 20, no. 1/2 (1981/82): 50-58.

Smallwood, Scott and Jared Bielby. "Solarsonics: Patterns of Ecological Praxis in Solar-Powered Sound Art." Paper presented at *Musique et écologies du son / Music and ecologies of sound*, Université Paris 8, 2013. <http://www.ualberta.ca/%7Essmallwo/solarsonics/solarsonics.pdf>

04 June 2026 - Video: The Sound of One Line Scanning

Nam June Paik, Bill Viola, Steina Vasulka, David Tudor/Lowell Cross, Gary Hill

Cross, Lowell. "Musica Instrumentalis, Video ii (B), Video ii (C), Video ii (L)." *Source: Music of the Avant Garde* 9 (1971): 3-10.

Gagnon, Jean. „A Demo Tape on how to Play Video on the Violin," *Art Journal*, 65:3 (2006): 70-81.

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- Goldman**, Jonathan. "The Buttons on Pandora's Box: David Tudor and the Bandoneon." *American Music* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 30-60. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/americanmusic.30.1.0030>
- Neuburger**, Susanne, Manuela Ammer, and Thomas Schmitt. *Nam June Paik - Exposition of music, electronic television: anlässlich der Ausstellung Nam June Paik, Music for All Senses, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 13.02. - 17.05.2009*. Köln: Buchhandlung Walther König GmbH & Co. KG. Abt. Verlag, 2009.
- Paik**, Nam June. "Afterlude to the Exposition Experimental Television 1963, Galerie Parnass." In *Videa 'n' Videology* (1959-1973), edited by Judson Rosebush, Syracuse: Everson Museum of Art, 1974. unpagged [http://www.vasulka.org/archive/4-30d/Videa\(1000\).pdf](http://www.vasulka.org/archive/4-30d/Videa(1000).pdf)
- Spielmann**, Yvonne. "Video, an Audiovisual Medium." In *See this Sound: Audiovisuology: A Reader*, edited by Dieter Daniels and Sandra Naumann, 314-325, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015.
- Viola**, Bill. "The Sound of One Line Scanning." In *Sound by Artists*, edited by D. Lander and M. Lexier, published by Art Metropole and Walter Phillips Gallery, 1990. http://www.iemed.org/publicacions/quaderns/12/The_Sound_of_One_Line_Scanning_Bill_Viola.pdf

18 June 2026 – Immersive AV (Parameter Mapping)

t.b.a.

25 June 2026, Experimental Setups and Media-Archaeological Explorations (Optical Sound, Videosynthesis)

Supporting Media

- Birtwisle**, Andrew. *Cinesonica: Sounding Film and Video*. Manchester: Manchester, University Press, 2010.
- Brougher**, Kerry, Olivia Mattis, Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles, Calif.), and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, eds. *Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music since 1900*. [London]: Washington, D.C.: Los Angeles: Thames & Hudson; Hirshhorn Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005.
- Chion**, Michel. *AudioVision, Sound on Screen*. Claudia Gorbman (Trans. & Ed.). New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Centre Georges Pompidou**, ed. *Sons & Lumières: Une Histoire Du Son Dans l'art Du XXe Siècle*. Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2004.
- Daniels**, Dieter, and Sandra Naumann, eds. *See This Sound: Audiovisuology*. Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2015.
- Kelly**, Caleb, ed. *Sound*. Documents of Contemporary Art. London: Cambridge, Mass: Whitechapel Gallery; MIT Press, 2011.
- Mollaghan**, Aimee. *The Visual Music Film*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Rogers**, Holly, and Jeremy Barham, eds. *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Online Repository

<https://cloud.udk-berlin.de/f/54665728>