

Ecstatic reading

Juliana Hodkinson

On/Off and *Ready for ecstasy* are two sound pieces in which I worked with Danish poet Ursula Andkjær Olsen's text and voice, and imagery by Sophia Kalkau, to create spatialized sonic environments connected to the female situated body. Using extremes of anechoic and hyperresonant spaces and, respectively, binaural/surround formats, we explored the possibilities of performative reading, ecstatic listening and the real-time unfolding of text, to underline the staging of female experience from the perspective of a body that is a site of connection – through fertility, infertility and menopause, motherhood and daughterhood - to the contemporary world and its capitalist mechanisms.

On/Off (2019) is a binaural/ambient sound installation by Ursula Andkjær Olsen and Juliana Hodkinson for the photo series *Off White/Solen er hvid* by Sophia Kalkau. *Ready for ecstasy* (2023) is a vocal piece based on Danish poet Ursula Andkjær Olsen's long-form poem *Mit smykkeskrin* with projected images and costume by Sophia Kalkau.

In *Ready for ecstasy*, the text is given a polyphonic setting with multiple pre-recorded layers of the author's voice and the voices of the six singers of Neue Vocalsolisten, together with live vocal staged performance, electronic fixed media and ambient drones. In an equally temporal yet silent dimension, the text is presented also by projections on dual screens – at times word by word, line by line or page by page.

In my paper, I will reflect on how audiovisual formats and technologies enable the reconfiguration of sound, body and subjecthood – embracing also the listener's perspective through immersion leading to participation through the inescapably social properties of speech in a polyphonic context as something that is always moving through space and between bodies, making relations between speakers and listeners.

On/Off (2019) was commissioned by The Royal Danish Library, with the support of Augustinus Fonden, Ursula Andkjær Olsen and Neumann Berlin, as part of the installation *Cirkelbryder/Circle Breaker* at The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen.

Ready for ecstasy (2023) was commissioned by Musik der Jahrhunderte, with the support of the Danish Arts Council, for performance by Neue Vocalsolisten at Eclat Festival, Stuttgart.

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Juliana Hodkinson is a Berlin-based composer and arts advocate, and associate professor in electronic and classical composition at the Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus. Her artistic practice spans works for object performance with instruments through electroacoustics to orchestral. Her work in cultural politics focuses on diversity and inequalities, system-change, and progressive circular values in pursuit of climate and societal restoration. She has published on gender and social relations, curating and migration, and on contemporary music and sound art, in *Seismograf*, *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Sound Art*, *Musicology Research*, and the ICI *Cultural Inquiry* series.