Title
Embodied Perception in Somatic Sound, Abstract

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Embodied Perception in Somatic Sound
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The paper presents artistic and practice based approaches to innovative haptic interface
technologies for creating interactive compositions and user experiences inside of a periphonic,
3D sound space. Somatic sound is here presented as a) as technological innovative musical
instrument, and b) as an experiential art installation. One of the main research foci is to explore
embodied experiences through moving, interactive and somatic sound. The term somatic is here
understood and used as in relating to the body in a physical, holistic and immersive manner.

The Somatic Sound project explores sound installations where the user can i) corporally control
the playback of multichannel sound through touch, and ii) simultaneously experience a three-
dimensional audio space as a physical continuum. The project combines the production of music
through touch-based, multi-channel 3D sound with the simultaneously placing the performer into
the position of a listener. The research investigates how this enables new and innovative
interpretations.

The paper will discuss different theoretical approaches to somatic sound from Descartes to
Pragmatism and Phenomenology. It will apply Heidegger’s description of breakdown scenarios
to analyze ‘natural attitudes’ in the meeting with human computer interfaces and more generally
with technology. Fundamental here is the often-misunderstood difference between Heidegger’s
Present-at-hand and Ready-at-hand concepts. Focusing on the importance of physical experience,
an argument for embodied consciousness is advanced. This argument follows from a dialectic
comparison of Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of the natural attitude: the way we behave in the
world as if it is not problematic with Shusterman’s notion of Somaesthetics.

Contributions of the paper will be introduction of new discourse of what embodiment implies in
media art and demonstrating this through artworks where embodied interactions turn action into
meaning. Further the paper will outline new practices of inquiry and knowledge making through
the emerging field of Somatic Computing.