

EQUIPMENT

The idea behind surveying Rostock's sonic environment was not simply to collect audio recordings from different parts of the city, but to create a full audio-visual experience for our audience. In other words, to give the listener a visual insight into the diverse sources of each sound produced. In order to realise this, we also took photographs, made video recordings, and recorded each other's spoken impressions as we walked through the city discovering and documenting the sound identities of each quarter. These would later be linked together to form the backbone of the 'Soundscapes of Rostock' exhibition and the interactive 'Soundmap' on this website. During team fieldwork, each person was designated a role. Two fieldworkers operated the audio recording equipment, one person made video recordings, another took photographs, and the last fieldworker took charge of the second audio recorder and conducted short interviews with each participant to document their personal impressions after each sound example had been captured by the team. We all had input as to whether a sound was worth of recording for the project, and this was usually based on whether we felt that the sound has some relevance to the identity of the place we were in. The equipment we used was as follows:

Audio Recording

All audio was recorded onto an H4n Zoom Handy Recorder apart from a handful of exceptions where mobile phones and dictaphones were used. During individual fieldwork, recordings were made with the two inbuilt stereo microphones on the recorder. However, as we wanted to create a Dolby Surround Sound effect for the sound installation part of our exhibition, we brought in a quadrophonic external microphone so that we could record each sound with four separate channels. As you can see from the photograph below, recording with four channels is a two-person operation. The idea is to point the microphones in opposite directions so that a 360° radius of sound is captured and this is then transferred to the audio exhibition so that the listener can have the experience of being encompassed by sounds which are being presented through four speakers around them. In most cases the audio was recorded as a WAV file at 44.1kHz/24 bits.



Daniel Wilke and Frances Wilkins recording a street musician on Breite Straße, 13 November 2010 (photo: MW)

Spoken impressions were recorded on a separate H4n Zoom Handy Recorder as much smaller MP3 files (96 kbps). These personal reflections from all members of the soundscapes team can be found on this website at the end of the section on soundscapes theory.

Visual Recordings



Team fieldwork in Rostock's Altstadt, 13 November 2010 (photo: BA)

A Sony Handycam was used as a means of documenting the visual and aural environment, and the source of the sound which we discovered. Video was recorded onto MiniDV at 16 bits, and a digital Cannon camera was also used to capture images of the sound source and chronicle the work of the soundscapes team.

Frances Wilkins