

Autumn Leaves

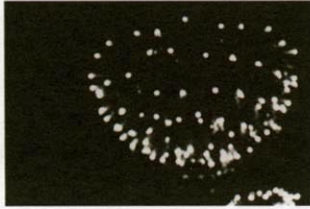
A photograph showing six microphones on stands in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The microphones are arranged in a line across the middle ground. The background features rolling hills under a clear blue sky. The top half of the image is the photograph, and the bottom half is a dark, textured background with white text.

Sound and the
Environment in
Artistic Practice

Edited by
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Cinemage





In New York, the snow came down in the middle of the night. In the twinkling of an eye, everything was covered by half a metre of snow, the city lights reflected in its white blanket. The sky is coloured red like wine. Somewhere, a radio blares out a continuous warning, 'Don't leave the house; an extraordinary cold wave covers the area'.

Go to Tonic by taxi. Across the Williamsburg Bridge. The view of Manhattan from the bridge is uncannily clear. The chill air is completely dry.

Meet with Alan Licht at a rental car shop in West Village, head to Baltimore in a red sports car. On the way, snow and rainy sleet falls. Arrive there considerably late. People are easygoing and they are not like elusive New Yorkers. However, their behaviour lacks a certain sensitivity.

Looking out of the kitchen window, admire the subtle variations in the sunshine. Seagulls are flitting around (it is close to the sea here). In the evening, darkness is falling. The scenery in twilight, it's an intensely strange view. Never tire of it.

Reading Andrey Tarkovsky's diary *Martyrolog* and fascinated by one chapter. "It is because the twentieth century has seen the rise of a kind of emotional inflation. When we read in a newspaper that two million people have been butchered in Indonesia, it makes as much impression on us as an account of our hockey team winning a match. The same degree of impression! We fail to notice the monstrous discrepancy between these two events. The channels of our perception have been smoothed out to the point where we are no longer aware. However, I don't want to preach about this. It may be that without it life would be impossible. Only the point is that there are some artists who do make us feel the true measure of things. It is a burden which they carry throughout their lives, and we must be thankful to them".

About ten seagulls are flying in the skies. No food along the seashore so they come over to the city.

The cold weather lasts for a few weeks then it gets milder. Melted snow changes into muddy water and mixes with dirt. It is melting Greenpoint into a grey street scene.

Damon and Naomi, they often chat away between songs. Naomi asks 'You like cliché, don't you?', 'Yeah, I like it, it's inspiring' says Damon.

It has become springlike. Today is very warm. When the temperature rises, you can catch the scent of various things. While I'm out walking, food from restaurants, garbage, flowers in front of delis, body odour from passersby... they mix with each other and it becomes the characteristic smell of this city and it gets in my nostrils.

The numbers of seagulls in the backyard skies have dwindled remarkably. Have they returned to the seashore?

Lymph gland swells out and my right eye is affected. The symptoms are exactly same as I had last year. I always have a problem with my left eye, so this is a half-blindness. Everything is blurred and can't see clearly. Reluctant to go out so do nothing, instead resting on the sofa for a long time.

I'm tired of doing nothing. Normally, I work for 12 hours, but now, I sleep for 12 hours.

A concert with Steve Beresford is scheduled for June in London. Listen to his old albums once more.

A quartet with Honsinger, Kondo and Toop which was released by Y Records in '81 and *The Bath of Surprise*. Burning colours change without grey tones.

Somewhere around the Williamsburg Bridge in Lower East Side. From time to time, conversations between people inside the many apartments flow out into the desolate and still street. Most of them are Spanish. The volume of the voices is low. I can't catch any meaning; they mingle with the darkness of the street and disappear smoothly. It's like spirits crossing the street.

Walk down the street in Williamsburg, the spirits have almost disappeared here and I can no longer feel them. Nobody realises and nobody cares.

The bright spring days seemed to be here to stay, but suddenly the snow starts to fall and things roll back into winter. The backyard landscape is the same as before.

Shelley Hirsch's story from the past, at dinner in the kitchen... Her hometown is East New York, Brooklyn. The neighborhood was on the verge of collapse and there was enormous racial tension and violence. When she was 17, she left for Manhattan where death and sex rolled around on the streets; she dodged them but occasionally got involved. People used to have stronger excitement in their own lives.

Sleepy, totally sleepy. The weather in New York in this season is always changeable. My body can't take it. Read a book on the sofa for a while and fall asleep.

February-March, 2004

Reference

Andrey Tarkovsky *Time Within Time: The Diaries 1970 – 1986* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), pp. 7 - 8