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author:

Marta Wódz

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SWPS University

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Radio, as it was argued by Friedrich Kittler, already in its early history was regarded as a tool allowing for making politics. Although nowadays it may seem to be an example of dated technology, overturned by other, newer media, the question of how the political potential recognized in radio in the early 20th century translates into contemporary reality, is still worth asking. Perhaps some general qualities of that medium can be described by observing how radio is used by contemporary artists. By placing wireless broadcast in the center of interest, transmission art – the term coined at the end of 1990s – allows to embrace a wide spectrum of artistic practices presenting the issue of transmission as political at its core. On the examples of radio-based projects by Katarzyna Krakowiak: parasitic Free Radio Jaffa and Reconstruction of the Shipyard's Broadcasting Centre set against the historical background of Krzysztof Wodiczko's works I am going to pose the question if the transmission art projects can nowadays fulfill the subversive potential recognized in radio almost 100 years earlier.

Marta Wódz – graduate of art history program in the framework of the Inter-area Individual Humanistic and Social Studies at the Warsaw University and the department of Media Art of the Art Academy in Warsaw, student in the Institute of Polish Culture of the Warsaw University. Since 2020 has been collaborating as a researcher with the Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography, Art & Visual Culture at the KU Leuven in Belgium.

Parasites on Waves: The Political Potential of Radio Transmission in the Works of Katarzyna Krakowiak

When the term *transmission art* was coined at the end of the 1990s by the New York-based collective Wave Farm, it was meant to embrace a wide spectrum of artistic practices placing wireless transmission in the center of interest, not necessarily (or maybe even not at all?) occurring inside the broadcasting studio, but including installations, performative actions, etc.¹ More importantly, transmission art projects – both those aimed at producing new broadcasts and those using pre-existing archival sources – were identified as being rooted in activist practices related to issues of spectrum regulation, surveillance, or restricted access to the discursive public sphere for different social groups. By drawing attention to the questions of who has the means to broadcast their own content or which forms of participation in the public sphere established on air are generally accepted, the issue of transmission was regarded as essentially political. In the North American context, the question of how spectrum allocation should be governed became especially important after the Telecommunications Act introduced in the USA in 1996 – this increased the number of frequencies that could be owned by one subject, thereby allowing for the extension of corporate control over the ether.² Inherently politically and socially engaged, transmission art is also inherently entangled with the local geopolitical context in which it appears. In this text I am interested in works which continue transmission art's tradition but which have migrated outside the USA; in particular, I am going to look at one of the transmission media – radio – as a tool used in contemporary artistic projects enacting civil disobedience, addressing its potentially emancipatory capacity to transgress borders and physical, architectonic barriers, in contrast with its history as a powerful

propaganda tool.

This potential can be observed in an example from the early history of radio. Before radio technology became used for entertainment, it was primarily a tool for secret military communication – even during the First World War, the idea of broadcasting records and reading newspapers to maintain the spirits of soldiers on the frontline was refused by the superior command of the German army as “the ‘abuse of army equipment’.”³ However, in 1918, this valuable equipment, not so long ago protected from leisure use, was left in the hands of the 190,000 demobilized radio operators.⁴ The question of how they would decide to use it caused legitimate concern to the Weimar Republic state (e.g. the Independent Socialist Party [USPD] very quickly registered their Central Broadcasting Bureau and obtained a broadcasting license). As argued by Friedrich Kittler, radio entertainment was introduced to counter the potential force accumulated in a tool that had suddenly fallen into the hands of common people:

For the simple purpose of avoiding the anarchistic abuse of military radio equipment, Germany received its entertainment radio network [...] Otherwise people themselves, rather than the government and the media industry, could have made politics.⁵

In this way, to maintain state control over radio transmissions, the military technology previously used for sending enciphered, classified messages between precisely defined points was transformed into global AM radio, introducing the new logic of widely accessible broadcasts for entertainment. Although nowadays radio may seem to be an example of dated technology, overturned by other, newer media, it seems important to ask how the subversive potential of radio recognized in the early 20th century can be embraced today. What I find fascinating is the paradoxical nature of radio, which

on the one hand is a fundamentally state-controlled medium with broadcasts aimed at specific national regions, and on the other, one whose scope intrinsically transgresses national borders. Perhaps the way radio is used by contemporary artists can help us better understand some general qualities of the medium. For that reason I am going to take a close look at projects by Katarzyna Krakowiak set against the historical background of Krzysztof Wodiczko's works from the 1970s, which can be positioned as a complementary voice adopting a significantly different attitude toward radio. With these two practices in mind, I would like to pose the following question: can transmission art projects fulfill the subversive potential of radio to "make politics," as was recognized in the early 20th century?

Borrowing frequencies⁶

In 1928, László Moholy-Nagy took a series of photographs from the viewing platform of the Berlin Radio Tower. The plunging perspective from atop became an implementation of the unexpected possibilities of seeing offered by the camera, which Moholy-Nagy called the "new vision."⁷ As an explicitly visible element of the otherwise ephemeral radio infrastructure, a transmission tower can be perceived as a reminder of our constant immersion in radio waves. However, Brandon LaBelle, professor of New Media at the University of Bergen, who specializes in Sound Studies, associates early radio towers with yet another phenomenon: national security – assured by both the functional aspect of the communication network it could facilitate and the symbolic or performative dimension of the tower perceived as a monument to national potency.⁸

In opposition to state-controlled transmissions from above, the radio interventions by Katarzyna Krakowiak occur at street level, leaving no visible trace or fixed infrastructure, thanks to the fact that she herself often becomes a “human antenna.” The artist focuses on micro-scale actions and inverts the typical direction of the broadcast: from top-down to a grassroots initiative bypassing official channels. Both of these qualities can be recognized as important strategies characteristic of transmission art projects.

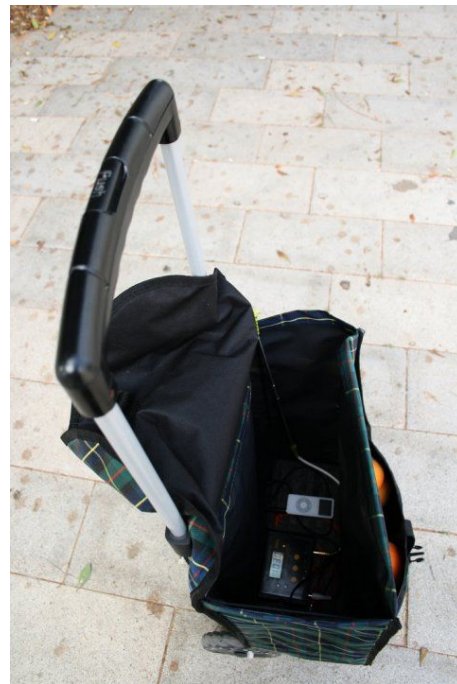


Katarzyna Krakowiak and Ronen Eidelman, *All.fm Free Radio Jaffa*, Israeli Center for Digital Art (Holon), Jaffa 2009

In 2008, Krakowiak was invited to participate in the exhibition *Ain't No Sorry* at the Modern Art Museum in Warsaw, and presented a project that became an introduction to her later, radio-related actions. During rush hours, Krakowiak repeatedly cycled around the streets with a radio transmitter attached to her bike; this could simultaneously disrupt regular broadcasts in eight cars in a line for about 25 seconds, which allowed her to transmit four short messages.⁹ Asked how her artistic practice evolved toward the use of radio waves, the artist stated that radio became a bridge which enabled her to “reach people in a different way.”¹⁰ Her aim was to disrupt the routine established by the constant repetition of usually brainless actions such as waiting in traffic jams – the announcements read by an emotionless, automatic voice addressed issues such as health problems caused by living in constant noise or calculations claiming that spending a daily average of half an hour in traffic jams would sum up to two years by the time one turned 72.¹¹ As the artist admitted, she felt the real impact of her actions when she passed a bar in which the loudspeakers were directed toward the tables outside. This allowed her to observe the reactions of the people eating there in a hurry between busy

daily activities, who were suddenly awoken by unexpected commentary on their situation.¹²

The process initiated by Krakowiak for *Ain't No Sorry* continued in Israel – her project *Mobile Radio all.FM, Free Radio Jaffa* was created during her residency at The Israeli Center for Digital Art (ICDA) in Holon (April 2009), in collaboration with artist and activist Ronen Eidelman.¹³ This time, the radio transmitter was placed inside a shopping trolley which the artist pulled along while strolling around Jerusalem Boulevard, the main road leading to Jaffa. The transmission was composed of short announcements and a pastiche advertisement in Hebrew – all addressing the issue of the eviction of Arab citizens.¹⁴ Although the artistic strategy of “borrowing frequencies” used in both projects was very similar, in the first case the disruptive wake-up function of the announcements was foregrounded, while in the latter, attention to the local context became crucial.



Katarzyna Krakowiak and Ronen Eidelman, *All.fm Free Radio Jaffa*, Israeli Center for Digital Art (Holon), Jaffa 2009

Jerusalem calling

It is worth examining an illustration accompanying a post about the project on the ICDA's website, with the slogan “Free Radio Jaffa. Liberating Space through Art and Action – all.FM.” It depicts a woman in a bathing suit sitting in a relaxed pose on a huge orange, enjoying a glass of what looks like orange juice. Much as the announcements transmitted by Krakowiak played with the format of the radio ad, offering former Arab houses as luxury goods, this drawing can also be perceived as mocking the

tourist-targeted commercials presenting Tel Aviv as the perfect holiday destination, equally perfectly covering up the constant violence toward Palestinians happening just around the corner. The world-famous Jaffa orange provided a flourishing business and source of pride for Palestinians still under the British mandate in the 1930s and 1940s. Jaffa, surrounded by orchards and with a huge port facilitating the export of fruit, was for years widely known as a place in constant need of a workforce, thus offering jobs to people of various ethnicities.¹⁵ After 1948, with the displacement of the Arab population, it became for Palestinians a symbol of the loss of the land associated with Nakba, while at the same time the Jaffa orange began to be promoted as a leading Israeli export product and a symbol of the “New Israel.”

In that region, radio has had a very direct involvement in politics and is strongly associated with resistance movements. This historical background constitutes an important context for Krakowiak’s work. The long-awaited public radio (widely announced by the press as early as 1934) was introduced to Palestine in 1936 in the form of the Palestine Broadcasting Service, popularly known as “Jerusalem Calling,” established by the British Mandate government. To paint the socio-political picture of the time, it is important to consider the demographical statistics: the 1930s were a time of massive immigration, with population growth in Palestine rising from 750,000 in the early 1920s to nearly 1.9 million by the end of the mandate. A remarkable shift also took place in the ethnic ratio – from 83,000–90,000 at the beginning of the 1920s (about 10% of all inhabitants), the Jewish population increased to 530,000–550,000 by 1944, representing roughly 30% of the overall population.¹⁶ The number of radio users can be only estimated on the basis of the radio licenses issued; nevertheless, according to calculations by historian Andrea L. Stanton

published in her book *"This Is Jerusalem Calling": State Radio in Mandate Palestine*, even if we assume that one license stands for a household of three users (it was often many more), in 1946, in comparison to press circulation, the PBS could reach more people than all the Palestinian newspapers combined.¹⁷

Even at the moment of its inauguration, social division based on ethnic origin was marked: in the PBS's opening speech, Mandate High Commissioner Arthur Wauchop assured the audience that broadcasts would maintain cultural standards sophisticated enough for European Jewish immigrants and, at the same time,



Radio artists, PBS, Jerusalem between 1936 and 1946. Repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

aim to educate the rural Palestinian population.¹⁸ The goal was to "stimulate new interests and make all forms of knowledge more widespread."¹⁹ Therefore, the core ideas for PBS programming implicated an oversimplifying division between the urban Jewish elite for whom radio should serve as means of entertainment and the rural working class of Arabs who needed the radio's pedagogical function. As described by Stanton, British policy in Palestine echoed colonial endeavors in India: in both cases "peasants" were perceived as a threat, a force which could carry destabilizing potential if left "without modernization." The colonial radio voice was therefore used to modernize them. According to Stanton, another impactful practice of the PBS was the use of language, which instead of presenting the idea of the mutual interdependency of the two communities, strengthened separation and stimulated antagonism.²⁰

Historically speaking, as LaBelle writes, the awareness of the potential existing in the ether brought forth the anxiousness to transform it into another subject of colonial takeover.²¹ Along the

same lines, the Palestinian radio, with its broadcasts in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, served as an additional element of colonial infrastructure: although both Jews and Arabs could program their transmissions, their actual contribution was limited to the choice of music and politically neutral topics for the invited speakers – any polemical discussion on politics was strictly forbidden. However, according to Stanton, the idea of establishing a broadcasting station was widely supported by “Palestinians of various backgrounds and political commitments.”²²

Analogous to the figure of the radio tower as a “monument to the nation,” radio stations were perceived at the time as a sign of statehood.²³ In this light, Stanton describes the position of the PBS as paradoxical, serving both the mandatory goals of the British but also securing international recognition, which from the Palestinian perspective in the longer term could have been used as an argument enabling the negotiation of greater autonomy or independence.²⁴

The first pirate stations, both Zionist and Arab, emerged under British rule; unsurprisingly, both were employed for political ends; however, there are more records of the transmissions aired by Zionist organizations preserved from the period. In 1946 Geula Cohen, one of the most famous speakers for Irgun (a Zionist extremist organization), was arrested live on air and sentenced by the British to five years’ imprisonment for illegal broadcasting.²⁵ The clandestine Palestinian radio gained power and its crucial role as a means of communication during the first Intifada, described by Israeli Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev as a “radio-led and -inspired” rebellion.²⁶ With the slogan “For the liberation of land and man” opening and closing most of its broadcasts, the Al-Quds Palestinian Arab station started transmitting on January 1, 1988 (less than a month after the Intifada’s outbreak); its founder Ahmed Jibril called it “the political and spiritual guide of the uprising.”²⁷ Another

important station, the Voice of the PLO-Baghdad (Palestine Liberation Organization) was already broadcasting in the early 1980s from various locations outside Palestinian territory, but Baghdad's station turned out to be equipped with the strongest transmitters, enabling the best possible reception of the signal on the West Bank. Radio became a medium with the power to validate information (which seems crucial for the organization of an uprising strongly reliant on the tactics of common civil disobedience) – political leaflets were read out on air to enable the distinction between genuine ones and those distributed by the Israeli forces to spread disinformation. At the same time, on a smaller, private scale, radio was a tool for families to pass messages to prisoners.²⁸

The 1993 Oslo Accords allowed Palestinians to establish their own TV, radio, or telephone networks, and thus the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation was created, which aired its first transmission from Jericho in 1994. However, the Accords granted control over the infrastructure and spectrum allocation to Israel, which made the whole Palestinian telecommunication system far from independent – a mechanism described by artistic/curatorial collective Radio Earth Hold as a “part of an architecture of occupation.”²⁹ In this light, Krakowiak's gesture of “borrowing the frequencies” in Jaffa becomes even more subversive, marking an outline for a horizontal counter-architecture entangled in the multi-layered socio-political context. In this sense, the artist's gesture of interweaving additional, peripheral voices which disrupt the routine of the centrally controlled radio soundscape, becomes significant not only because of the content of the disruption, but also because of the breaking of order itself.

Radio parasite

Ewelina Godlewska-Byliniak has analyzed *Free Radio Jaffa* by looking at it via the notion of “noise” understood in Jacques Attali’s terms as a disruption interfering with audial transmission – even if that signal has its own meaning.³⁰ According to this framework, noise cannot exist on its own, but can only be recognized in relation to elements of the transmitting infrastructure. Godlewska-Byliniak describes radio as a means of communication but, at the same time, as a tool allowing for disturbance or disorientation, which has the potential to reimagine the very communication practices.

What is at stake in this game is the maintenance of certain openness, fluidity and uncertainty on the periphery of diverse established radio practices, but also the creation of free manifestation areas through virus and parasite interventions at their very core.³¹

In Krakowiak’s case, these “free manifestation areas” perhaps become particularly visible when opened up and also made available to other people. For example, in November 2010, Krakowiak and Eidelman ran a two-day workshop in Holon, during which participants could create their own broadcasts and air them in public space with the use of all.FM transmitters.

Free Radio Jaffa became part of a larger, long-term project – *Autobiography of a City*, run by the director and curator of the ICDA, Eyal Danon, and aimed at examining the collective memory of the place by working with members of the local community. The complexity of very different historical narratives co-existing in Jaffa makes this task particularly challenging; nevertheless, the project hoped for:

promoting a public multicultural discussion with which to expose, document and raise awareness of the untold story of different national, ethnic, religious and gender groups within Israel as part of a future process of reconciliation and healing.³²

It strongly focused on knowledge from below, and included a series of video interviews with Palestinian inhabitants of the city.

The aim of these interviews was to enable Palestinians to tell the story of Palestinian Jaffa, the pre-'48 Jaffa, from their own perspective and memories, thus creating a new room for the city's Palestinian history.³³

What I find important in this description is the connection between the spoken narratives and the spatial dimension described as a "new room" in history. This is exactly how I interpret the meaning of the slogan "Radio Jaffa offers a free space which is much needed in Jaffa": it can refer to the physical, embodied experience of the living conditions in Jaffa, but it is also about stretching the space between established narratives and finding a passage for the unheard ones. These two realms become intertwined, so the space understood as ephemeral is no less real than the physical one. This is particularly interesting in relation to the historical example of Radio Tel Aviv – a private station which began legal broadcasting as early as 1932, but the license of which was withdrawn by the mandate government in 1935 when plans to launch the PBS became well advanced: there was not enough room for more broadcasters – both physically and metaphorically.³⁴

To take a closer look at how this free space can be created, let us return to the vocabulary of the previous quote by Godlewska-Byliniak: "virus and parasite interventions" are described as often being used in relation to pirate radio practices. While

“virus” seems less relevant, describing processes characterized by the possibility of viral transmission and reproduction, “parasite,” when applied to *Free Radio Jaffa*, can open up another interesting perspective for analysis. This audial parasite is a type of noise, a disruption in the system – for example, Godlewska-Byliniak refers to the writer and audio artist Gregory Whitehead:

Radio happens in sound, but I don't believe that sound is what matters about radio, or any of the acoustic media. What does matter is the play among relationships: between bodies and antibodies, hosts and parasites, pure noise and irresistible fact, all in a strange parade, destination unknown, fragile, uncertain.³⁵

If the radio soundscape can be imagined as a segmented structure, organized in such a way as to prevent overlaps between the growing number of simultaneously broadcasting voices, then Whitehead's approach concentrates on what moves across those divisions. What I would like to emphasize with this example is the shift of focus – from the creation of an independent, free space which can be inserted as layer, parallel to other narratives, toward the relationship and co-existence of more than one body. Although “parasite” can be connoted negatively, it aptly characterizes the mechanism of “borrowing the frequencies”: while radio programs broadcasted on different wavelengths exist simultaneously but separately, without any point of intersection, the parasitic nature of *Free Radio Jaffa* imposes crisscrossing. The message transmitted by Krakowiak and Eidelman can never function in isolation: it can be heard only by those who already had their radios switched on and were listening to other narratives or other voices, with which *Free Radio Jaffa's* announcements can be confronted. Thanks to this quality, it does not simply create another layer on the

surface, but really dives into the discursive urban tissue.

However, in opposition to the bottom-up direction marked by Krakowiak's actions, this parasitic mechanism can also be used with a top-down trajectory. The reflection on noise and its political function also appears in the radio-based works of another Polish artist, Krzysztof Wodiczko. Although his actions took place prior to the emergence of transmission art as a concept, they can serve as an important historical backdrop against which one can show how artistic gestures incorporating broadcasting media are unavoidably embedded in the local political context of a particular time. In his interpretation, radio receivers become symbolic and physical objects, but are used against their intended functions. In 1970 at Galeria Muzyczna in Warsaw, together with Szábolcs Esztényi, Wodiczko organized a performative action entitled *Just Radio Transistors*, during which he invited the audience to take part. With the help of precisely prepared graphic scores, participants were encouraged to approach the transistor radios as manual toys or instruments with knobs and keys.³⁶ The concert, with eight radios simultaneously playing but at the same time being played, and with Esztényi as its conductor, was mirrored by the concert performed by the Youth Association of the Polish Composers' Union [Koło Młodych Związku Kompozytorów Polskich] taking place in a neighboring room.³⁷ Cultural historian and curator David Crowley has drawn a parallel between *Just Radio Transistors* and the radio-based performances of John Cage, such as *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* from 1951; however, he also emphasized a different overtone of Wodiczko's action due to the Polish political context of the 1970s.³⁸ Since the radios were tuned to different wavelengths, the disharmonious sound produced by their operators resembled the noise of radio jamming. As described by Crowley, in the 1960s and 1970s the practices of blocking particular radio shows became much more

elaborate and systematic, creating an entire infrastructure – for example Radio Free Europe’s transmissions in Polish were shrouded by jammers in Kiev, Leningrad, and even Tashkent. Jamming was especially increased at moments of political upheaval such as strikes in the 1970s, preventing people from receiving information about events. As Crowley summarizes: “In fact, the breakdown of radio broadcasts into cacophony could be taken as a loud sign of state disapproval.”³⁹ Hence, all the performers in *Just Radio Transistors*, including the conductor, had their ears blocked with earplugs. This brings up the question of what it means not to listen to the heavily state-controlled radio, but at the same time, as indicated by Daniel Muzyczuk, the production of the signal bypassed official channels and can therefore be seen as a subversive gesture in itself.⁴⁰

If we think about radio jamming as a layered structure of interwoven voices trying to appear on top of one another (sometimes as seemingly innocent, delicate instrumental music covering the actual broadcast), the mechanism can become a thread connecting it to *Free Radio Jaffa*, proving that this parasitic relationship can also work in the opposite direction. Instead of searching for more room by borrowing the official channels’ frequencies, the parasite is released by the state institution. As Crowley refers to that historical aspect of *Just Radio Transistors*: “It had a much darker address, suggesting the limits of communication as well as the corruption of the airwaves in the People’s Republic of Poland.”⁴¹

According to the scholar, Wodiczko and Esztényi’s action not only presented the alienation caused by such limits but even amplified it. What emerges from the juxtaposition of Krakowiak’s and Wodiczko’s works is the difference between the choice of position – transmitter versus receiver. Although both attitudes are active (Wodiczko manipulated the received broadcast and

refused to listen to it in its original form), and despite his technical skills in constructing instruments, the idea of transmitting his own content did not appear in Wodiczko's works. Set against that backdrop, Krakowiak's strategy of intercepting and inverting the totalizing mechanisms of radio becomes significant: by making different narratives meet, "borrowing frequencies" appears as a potential antidote to the aforementioned alienation. It shifts attention from the singularity of the transmissions existing in separated channels, toward their interaction in a multi-vocal environment. In a more direct form, using radio waves to reconnect can be observed in another of Krakowiak's works, *The Reconstruction of the Shipyard's Broadcasting Center*. Here, in order to break through the "limits of communication," the artist used her own physical presence as a transmitter – a human antenna.

Human antenna

To transmit is to tap the
political heart of social
connection.⁴²

For Katarzyna Krakowiak, the idea of sound as the sum of invisible waves seems to be almost inseparable from her thinking about space and its limits. In several of her projects, the artist uses sonic oscillations to examine architecture and render its form tangible – in this sense, the buildings used by Krakowiak can also become transmitters.⁴³ *The Reconstruction of the Shipyard's Broadcasting Center* was a project commissioned for the Alternativa 2011 art festival, which took place at the Gdansk Shipyard.⁴⁴ The exhibition space was adapted from the building of the former main warehouse, Hall 90B; this time, more than to the building itself, Krakowiak



Katarzyna Krakowiak, *Human Antenna - Rozgłośnia Stocznia 94FM*, Alternativa, Instytut Sztuki Wyspa, Gdańsk 2011

directed her attention toward the space in between various areas of the shipyard and used radio waves to reconnect them.

For the duration of the festival, the artist recreated the broadcasting center that used to function within the shipyard. The content of the transmissions was composed of archival broadcasts supplemented with a new introduction presenting the history of the original Shipyard's Broadcasting Center added by its organizer and host Stefan Kukliński. The broadcasting hours introduced by Krakowiak during the festival were planned according to the traditional working routine in the shipyard: the first program was aired during the breakfast break, the second at the time of the shift changeover. In her performance during the opening of the exhibition, Krakowiak became an essential part of the broadcasting infrastructure – standing on the rooftop, holding the antenna above her head, she embodied a radio tower.

In parallel to the totalizing view from above, the radio tower as a center of transmission enables acousmatic radio voices to be widely heard. As a voice without a body or visible source, the acousmatic voice functions like an oracle, holding a position of authority and omnipotence. The nature of the voices transmitted by Krakowiak is significantly different, but what then happens when the artist both metaphorically and physically turns into part of the device by which the signal is broadcast? In the description of Krakowiak's work, the Shipyard's Broadcasting Center was compared to a blood circulatory system used to facilitate communication within a closed environment.⁴⁵ Instead of the typical architecture of the radio tower, Krakowiak's broadcast was mediated by a body transformed into a transmitter. In this case, a single body armed with the right



Katarzyna Krakowiak, *Human Antenna - Rozgłośnia Stocznia 94FM*, Alternativa, Instytut Sztuki Wyspa, Gdańsk 2011

equipment became the linking element which allowed for re-establishing (even if only symbolically) the “on air” connection for that particular community, binding the ephemeral processes with the embodied figure. Isn’t that exactly how the threatening scenario of the common people taking over the means of transmission, envisioned over 100 years earlier by the state of the Weimar Republic, might look? In this sense, the artistic practice using the embodied transmission can become one way to “make politics.” Krakowiak recognizes ether as an invisible space, yet no less real than any other. It is governed by multiple influences including the rules of the market, but could equally have been organized otherwise. Mobile or with fixed localization, Krakowiak’s radio waves establish territories on which power relations are somehow shifted.

The artist seems to fully acknowledge the fact that the radio spectrum is highly regulated by both the state and commercial enterprises. Yet, at the same time, this does not prevent her from bending it to her own needs and finding some additional “free” space in which to weave her own contribution. Krakowiak’s “free” space also rejects the capitalist market rules imposed on airwaves: by placing a moment of silence in the middle of an advertisement, she neither sells nor produces anything. Her actions are very much in line with the approach which foregrounds the potential of radio to be the means of communication coming from below, either within the closed circuit of the shipyard, or in the open environment with a much more diverse and random group of people who would experience the disruption and possibly receive the message.

However, trying to understand how the disruptive potential recognized in the ability to create one’s own broadcasts translates into contemporary reality, both *Just Radio Transistors* and *Free Radio Jaffa* can help us to see the important shift which has happened together with technological development.

Perhaps in a time when many broadcasting tools are widely accessible, the political potential of transmission art lays no longer in transmission per se, but in how that transmission relates to pre-existing ones. How it can establish a connection between various physical and ephemeral elements which may at first glance seem not to have a crossover point, diverse narratives, or to recall Gregory Whitehead, the relationship “between bodies and antibodies.”

*

Between 1934 and 1939, photographers working for the American Colony in Jerusalem took a series of photos of the radio towers newly built in Ramallah. As with Moholy-Nagy’s aforementioned photos, the pictures incorporate the geometric structure of the mast in the composition but offer an entirely inverted, bottom-up perspective, and in some of them a human figure is additionally used to indicate the scale of the dominant construction.⁴⁶ Perhaps this shift of perspective might well illustrate Katarzyna Krakowiak’s use of radio transmission understood as coming from below, mediated by the physical presence of the artist’s body, but always in relation to other, pre-existing constructions, in a parasitic gesture of disrupting the strictly controlled radio spectrum.



Radio masts and station in Ramallah between 1934 and 1939. Dry plate negative, repository: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.

- 1 Galen Joseph-Hunter, Penny Duff, and Maria Papadomanolaki, *Transmission Arts: Artists and Airwaves (Art + Performance)* (New York: PAJ Publications, 2011), xi.
- 2 Ibid., xii.
- 3 Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 96.
- 4 Ibid., 97.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Term used in the artist's bio in: Katarzyna Krakowiak and Bogna Świętkowska, "Architektura dźwięków," *Notes na 6. Tygodni* 54 (2009), 77.
- 7 Adam Mazur, *Okaleczony świat: historie fotografii Europy Środkowej 1838-2018* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych Universitas, 2019), 125.
- 8 Brandon LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life*, 150.
- 9 Krakowiak and Świętkowska, "Architektura dźwięków," 74.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 The name of the project in that form was mentioned in an interview in 2009. According to the artist's website, the project is currently listed under the title *All.FM* and consists of two works: *Human Antenna* (Gdańsk, May 2011) and *Free Radio Jaffa* (Tel-Aviv, 2009). The project was presented in the *View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture* journal, issue 2/2013, accompanied by Ewelina Godlewska-Byliniak's essay entitled "Free Radio Jaffa – Hearing the Unheard" (trans. Marta Skotnicka), <https://www.pismowidok.org/en/archive/2013/2-images-of-terror-visibility-of-history/free-radio-jaffa-hearing-the-unheard>.
- 14 For the full transcription, see: Katarzyna Krakowiak, *All.FM*, <http://katarzyna-krakowiak.com/all-fm-en/> (accessed October 12, 2020).
- 15 For more information about the history and symbolic meaning of the orange in Palestine, see: Eyal Sivan, dir. *Jaffa, The Orange's Clockwork* (2009); Nasser Abufarha, "Land of Symbols: Cactus, Poppies, Orange and Olive Trees in Palestine," *Identities* 15,

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- 16 Andrea L. Stanton, *"This Is Jerusalem Calling": State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 2.
- 17 Ibid., 12.
- 18 Rachel Dedman, Lorde Selys, and Arjuna Neuman, "Radio Earth Hold 001: The Colonial Voice," *The Contemporary Journal* 3 (April 2020), 2.
- 19 Stanton, *"This Is Jerusalem Calling,"* 4.
- 20 Ibid., 20.
- 21 LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories*, 147.
- 22 Stanton, *"This is Jerusalem Calling,"* 16.
- 23 LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories*, 150.
- 24 Stanton, *"This is Jerusalem Calling,"* 17.
- 25 Dedman, Selys, and Neuman, "Radio Earth Hold 001," 2.
- 26 Kirsten Nakjavani Bookmiller and Robert J. Bookmiller, "Palestinian Radio and the Intifada," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 4 (1990), 98, doi:10.2307/2537391 (accessed July 28, 2020).
- 27 Ibid., 97.
- 28 Rachel Dedman, *Radio Earth Hold: The Colonial Voice* (presentation, East European – North African – Middle East Forum, Biennale Warszawa, Warsaw, June 9, 2019).
- 29 Dedman, Selys, and Neuman, "Radio Earth Hold 001," 1.
- 30 Godlewska-Byliniak, "Free Radio Jaffa."
- 31 Ibid., 6.
- 32 Daniel Monterescu, *Jaffa Shared and Shattered: Contrived Coexistence in Israel/Palestine* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 91.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Stanton, *"This is Jerusalem Calling,"* 15.

- 35 Gregory Whitehead, "Radio Play Is No Place: A Conversation between Jérôme Noetinger and Gregory Whitehead," in: *Experimental Sound & Radio*, ed. Allen S. Weiss (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2001), 89.
- 36 For the documentation of the scores, see: Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź, 20th and 21st Century Art Collection, <https://zasoby.msl.org.pl/arts/view/5895> (accessed December 19, 2020).
- 37 Łukasz Ronduda and Piotr Uklański. *Sztuka polska lat 70: awangarda* (Warsaw: Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, 2009), 304.
- 38 David Crowley and Daniel Muzyczuk, *Sounding the Body Electric: Experiments in Art and Music in Eastern Europe 1957–1984*, trans. Marcin Wawrzyńczak (Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, 2012), 85.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 81.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 127.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 97.
- 42 LaBelle, *Acoustic Territories*, 164.
- 43 Krakowiak and Świątkowska, "Architektura dźwięków," 74.
- 44 The work is listed under this title in the Alternativa catalogue (2011). On the artist's website and in the film library of Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw it can currently be found as *Human Antena – Rozgłośnia Stocznia 94FM*.
- 45 "Reconstruction of the Shipyard's Broadcasting Center, Katarzyna Krakowiak," in: *Labour & Leisure. Guidebook*, exh. cat. (Gdańsk: Instytut Sztuki Wyspa, 2011), 40.
- 46 For more photographs, see: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Online Catalog, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=radio&sp=1&co=matpc> (accessed November 28, 2020).

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