



NAVIGATIONAL CHART OF

LOS RUIDOS QUE SOMOS

PATRIMONIOS SONOROS
DE LOS ANDES

*The Noises that Make Us:
Sound Heritage of the Andes*



ICOM international
council
of museums

ICOM consejo
internacional
de museos
Ecuador

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*The Noises that Make Us:
Sound Heritage of the Andes*



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December, 2021

Mucho, mucho ruido / So much, so much noise
Ruido de campanas / Noisy bells
Tanto, tanto ruido / So much, so much noise
Ruido de escaleras / Noisy stairwells
Tanto, tanto ruido / So much, so much noise
Ruido de ventanas / Noisy windows
Que golpean, que golpean / That thwack, that thwack

La Derecha

Quito/ Bogotá, Latin America, November 2021

Dear Museum Community of Latin American and the World:

To Whom It May Concern:

What was your experience of the pandemic within your communities? How did you resolve the challenge of fostering meaningful dialogue with the public? Did you come up with new collections? Did you transform your narratives?

From our homes—and from behind our computers—we met, became friends and, by joining our voices, a binational project took shape: *Los ruidos que somos: patrimonios sonoros de los Andes* (*The Noises that Make Us: Sound Heritage of the Andes*). It was born in the midst of the global pandemic that began in March 2020, giving us the opportunity to think about the role of museums in the face of social isolation, the connectivity issues of the communities from our countries, and the impossibility of working in person in our museum spaces. *Los ruidos que somos* is also one of the projects selected by the Strategic Allocation Review Committee (SAREC) for the Committee for the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) "Solidarity Projects 2021."

As with all good journeys, we have had the best possible companions: ICOM Ecuador, ICOM Colombia, CECA Latin America, and the museum networks of Ecuador (Fundación Museos de la Ciudad, Museo Casa del Alabado, Museo Archivo de Arquitectura del Ecuador, Patronato Municipal San José, and Escuela de Música Yarina) and Colombia (Museo del Vidrio de Bogotá, Museo Arqueológico de Soacha, Laboratorio de Creación y Memoria la Esquina Redonda, and Museo Nacional de Colombia). To our esteemed colleagues, all of our gratitude.

Los ruidos que somos has allowed us to conceive sound as an essential part of life that connects people with their past and memory, to the places they inhabit, and to their fondest stories. Sound was—and is—at the same time the medium, foundation, and material that allowed us to feel close and connected, even while separated by thousands of kilometers.

In this navigational chart, we want to share with you a possible creation route to showcase what we consider the most significant and beautiful part of sound-based knowledge: how sound is identified, registered, and disseminated.

All journeys, no matter how well planned, encounter obstacles. Likewise, we came up against heavy traffic, collapsed public transportation, unstable connections, and closed museums. But the journey has been worth it. We only hope that, after interacting with this letter, you, too, will become infected with our passion and need to work with diverse communities, and feel encouraged, from your museums and the spaces you inhabit, to MAKE NOISE.

Listening

Listening

Since we do not know what we are going to encounter on our path, at the beginning of a journey we feel different emotions: nerves, fear, happiness, hope, excitement, and even insecurity. To make our trip comfortable, we suggest you start with intentional and active listening. Below are some exercises that will help us to perceive the world of sound in a different way.

The introduction: Before carrying out a group exercise of sound construction, it is important that we know with whom we are about to begin the journey, that we get to know each other, and that we can entrust each other with our most precious sounds.

To get past our shyness, let's do a round of introductions asking each of the travelers to share their names along with

a sound that identifies them. This can be produced by the body; let each person's creativity be heard.

Immerse yourself in the sound:

Bearing in mind that we are never isolated from sound, let's close our eyes and pay attention to everything we hear.

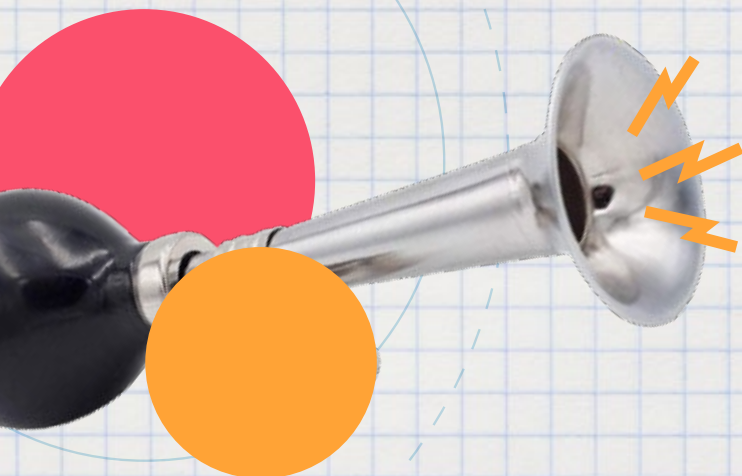
Let's make the place where we are a safe space. Listen.

Here are some questions that may be useful for this purpose:

1. Which is the closest sound we hear, and which is the farthest?
2. Which is the most beautiful sound?
3. Are there annoying sounds? Could they be called noise?
4. What are the colors of these sounds?
5. What images do they produce?

Sound is always an indication of something, someone, some moment, or place. It is also movement and life. Sound is not only perceived by the ear, but by the whole body, and not all sounds are to our liking.

Noise cannot be fully defined; it is diffuse, disordered, and sometimes unnameable. However, listening has its conditions: life experience, places that



are provisionally or temporarily inhabited and/or occupied, education, among other aspects, make it so that what for some is just noise, for others is not.

So that we won't get lost in the world of sound, let us remember to write down the date and place in which we do our listening. Let's write down a list of sounds; from the most distant ones, such as from the street, the wind, dogs barking, to those from the places we inhabit and produce ourselves, such as our heartbeat, growling stomach, and breathing.

Together, let's share the sounds that most caught our attention. How was the listening experience? What happened in each person's body? Was there silence?

Pausing our journey for a moment is important. Giving ourselves a moment while we walk or are on public transportation gives us the opportunity to rediscover the world and its sounds, and to refine our sensibilities. Our ear and whole body lend themselves to immersion in the sonorous.

If you want to listen
a little more, see the
podcast: A Journey
through the Ear



Noises that Matter

The Suitcase

Do you remember the voice of your grandfather or your grandmother? What did the kitchen sound like in the place you lived as a child? And your pet? Did it make a sound you could identify it by, even in silence? What did school recess sound like? We invite you to pack all the sounds that you consider useful for accompanying us on this journey. So that you won't forget any of them, we suggest you dig into your memories for a moment and make a **sound biography**:

Let's find a sound that represents us at the age of 3; one from when we were 9 years old, then one when we were 12, 15, 18, 21, 30 ... and so on, until we get to the present.

Using our bodies and the objects around us, let's try to evoke and share these sounds. Let's share the reasons why they matter in our lives.

Capsule:

Some biographies aren't personal. What would a sound biography of your whole family be like? What would one about your community be like? And about your city? Have you ever wondered how sounds

influence a context of war, persecution, or violence? How is silence perceived in these contexts? Do sounds resonate the same in the Andes as by the sea? At night as during the day? On the street as at home?

These exercises show us that we not only listen with the body, but that many sounds are housed in our brains. Therefore, we also listen with memory.

Let's try to organize the collection of sounds stored in memory based on the following questions:





- Where do sounds resonate in you?
- Is there a sound that represents an important moment in your life?
- Which of your sounds do you find the most beautiful?
- Which has the best story?
- From your collection, what sound would you like people to hear 150 years from now?

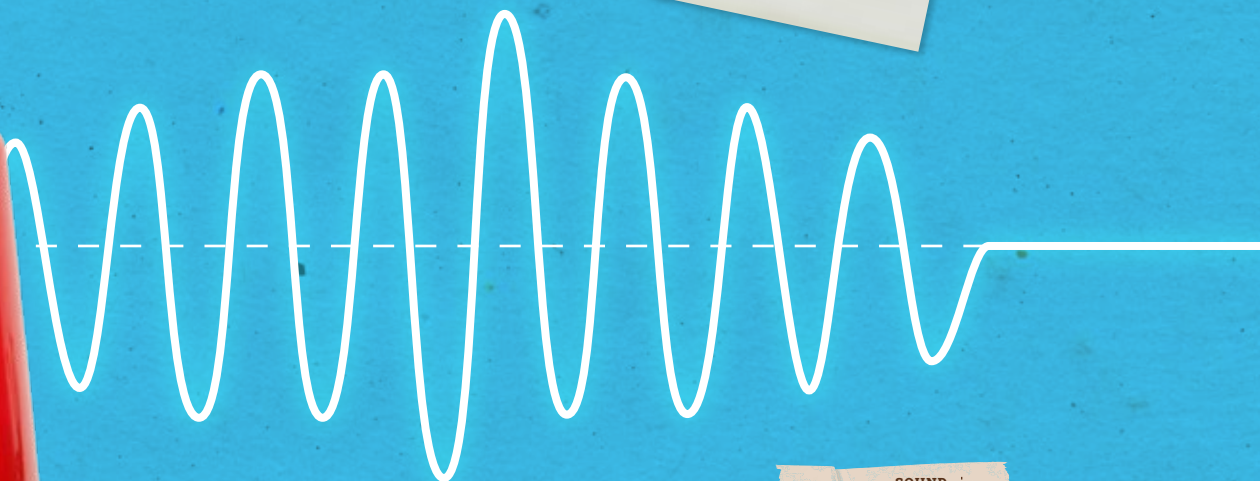
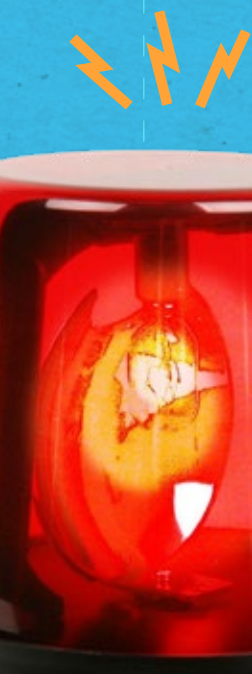
Not all sounds are equally important. We only carry in our suitcase and on our journey the ones that are most meaningful to us. We will call these sounds **sonidos (contra) patrimoniales or (counter) heritage sounds**.

Capsule: Just as with a system of objects (Baudrillard, 2010), we can think of sounds as a system classified according to their function in the culture in which they are produced. This culture or cultural system is dynamic and mutable. Therefore, the function and meanings of produced sounds are also mutable.

The way in which the sounds of a culture are related to build a narrative varies, allowing the creation of narratives of the past in the present with a view towards the memory of those who make up this culture, which in turn is subjective, since it depends on the voices of those who make it. More than recognizing and preserving sound as heritage, we are interested in the tension that occurs between heritage valuation and everyday life; the interstice in which the sounds of life develop and its relationship to memory—not as anchor, but as trigger. That is why we speak of counter heritage sound, understanding that the conflicts in a sound system in constant mutation and movement are a possibility for generating intimate encounters with the heritable, and for promoting experiences with infinite symbolic and metaphorical charge, always on the margin of everything that numbs (Falcón, 2015).

In this QR Code we leave you information that can help you delve into sound concepts:

Memories: Mini Cycle
of Conversations The
Noises That We Are



The (Counter) Heritage

Sounds that Make Us

These sounds are very important because they narrate our history as well as that of our families, they give an account of the places in which we live, study, work, and relate to the world and with others, and they are closely linked to our identity, to such an extent that we dare say they are life itself.

This leads us to believe that an important part of this journey is recording, transforming, and sharing our sounds with others.

Recording

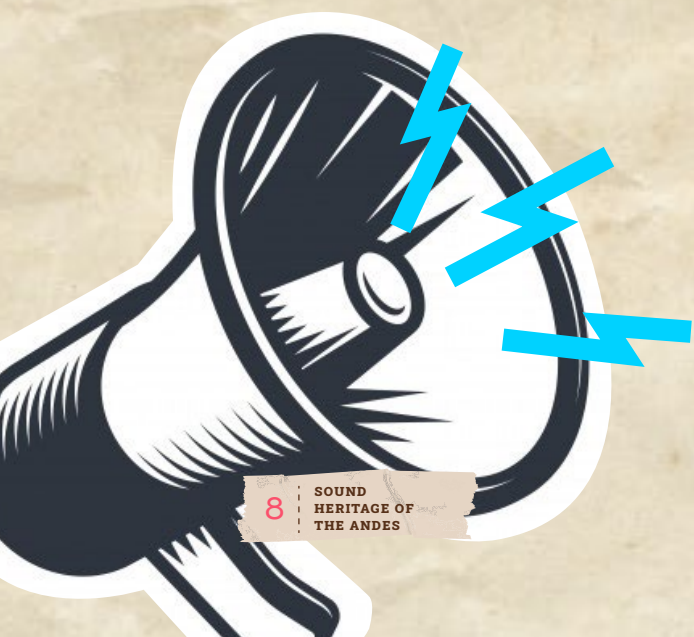
As we move through the back alleys of listening, we are already employing the main tools needed for the task: our ears and our brains which, as we'll experience, are capable of storing and accounting for

an infinity of sounds. But how do we make others have an experience similar to ours?

Let's find a cell phone or a sound recorder at home or in the museum and experiment with them. Turn on the devices, open their applications, use the different available buttons, record the environment, your voice, a car, the sound of a window, a conversation in a public space, and a dog barking... Listen to those sounds, try to erase the ones you don't like, and see if there are any options for transforming them.

Remember that our goal is to record heritage sounds. Think about the places in which they are found, about the voices that produce them and, without further ado, go toward them: How do they sound? What qualities do they have? Is it possible to identify the sounds that interest us in the recording we are building? You will probably have to do this exercise more than once because there are sounds that cannot be easily heard and recorded.

Even without using state-of-the-art technology, we can make very good recordings considering the following instructions:



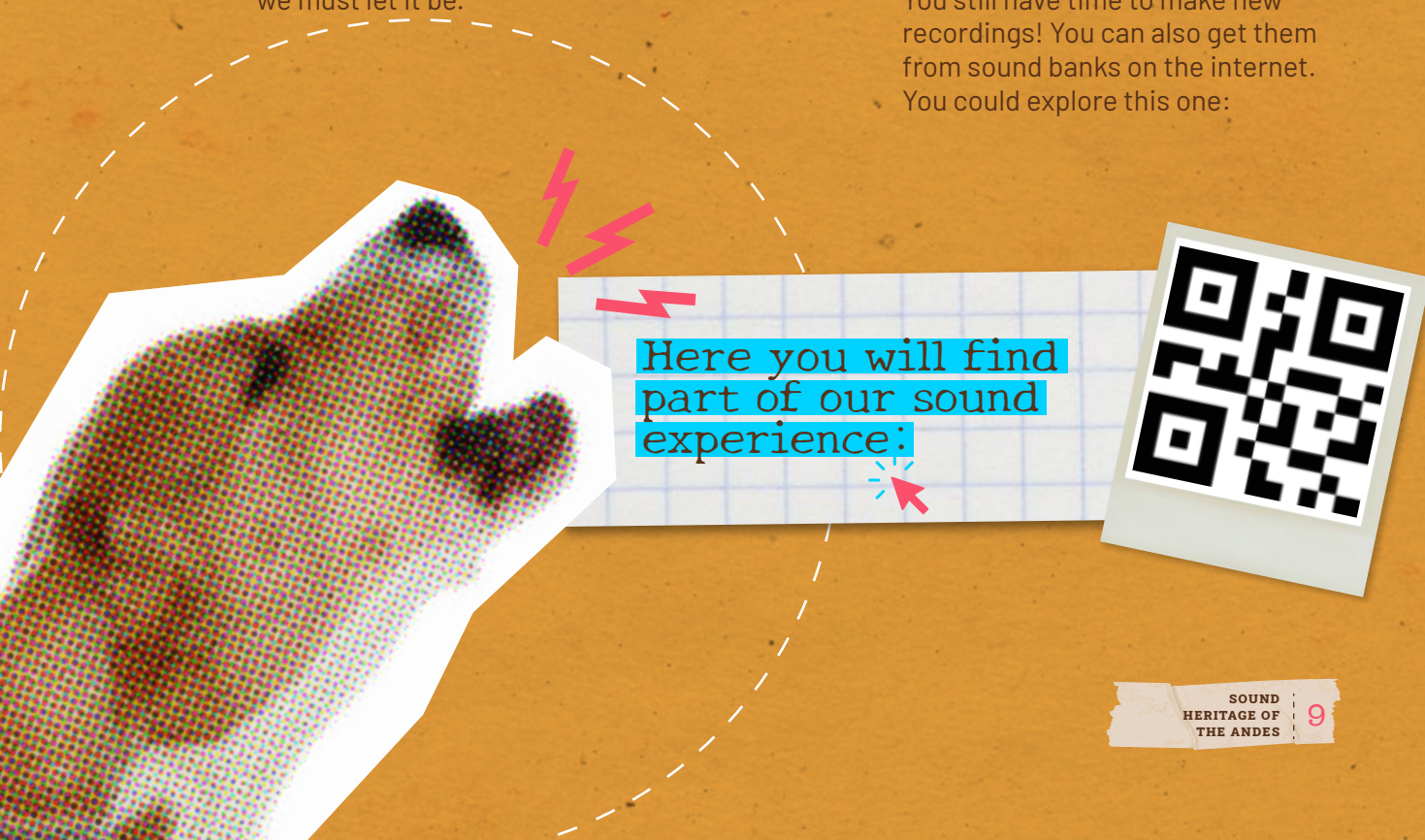
1. Observe and learn well the devices with which you will do this work. Locate the position of the microphones on them. When making a sound recording, make sure that the microphones are facing toward the source producing the sound.
2. We should create our recordings close to the sound source. This will give our recording the best quality and clarity.
3. The foam that covers professional microphones prevents the noise of wind, for example, from being picked up. Using sponges and foam, we can make our own homemade sound filters (see tutorial in QR).

Don't fret! No matter how careful we are with the sounds, it is possible that noises that are part of our world will seep into our recordings: the voice of a street vendor, the sound of a motor, the barking of a dog, or a sudden gust. Sound is and we must let it be.

Transforming

In themselves, the sounds that we have recorded up to this point make up an important route in our sonic shuffle, but the experience does not end here. It is possible that we have made more than one recording. Maybe we have several sound fragments, and perhaps we want them all to be part of the same sound. If our feelings lead us to these destinations on the map, there are many things we can consider:

1. We must listen to ourselves seriously. What do we want to communicate? What is the best way to do it? What should the sound sequence be? We may need to organize our ideas in a picture or writing, as a script or travel itinerary.
2. The language of sound has four elements that will help us navigate this ocean: 1) voice, 2) music, 3) sound effects, and 4) silence. Do you still need a sound element? You still have time to make new recordings! You can also get them from sound banks on the internet. You could explore this one:



Here you will find
part of our sound
experience:



Capsule

Voice: Voice: comes out of our mouth, articulates our lips, tongue, and vocal cords, uses the capacity of our lungs, and even the belly. It is noises, hisses, whistles, screeches, and words. The voice articulates stories, dialogues, interviews, monologues, or provides sound texture to our clatter.

Music: sounds that have cadence, repetition, rhythm, melody, and harmony. It is made up of songs that we listen to on the radio, on our cell phones, or those that we author ourselves and produce with our own voices, bodies, and musical instruments. There is also the music played by our grandparents, and that which comes from nature, from birds... Music helps to highlight the communicative intentions of our noises.

Sound effects: the wind, a car, a bark, the sound of someone walking on wood, the sound of a lake, a mountain, the desert, or the city, which are sounds we can use to recreate a situation, to set the mood for a narrative, and also to emphasize a message.

Silence: almost always refers to the absence of sound or noise. It is also related to pauses in speech or music, which allow us to generate various sensations: fear, doubt, suspense, etc. However, there is no absolute silence; the world, the universe, our bodies and our memory are always making noise.

3. These recordings are a treasure! Therefore, we must take care of and organize them in the best possible

way. We recommend creating folders on our cell phones and computers to find our sounds easily whenever we want.

4. Today, sounds are mixed and edited in different applications and programs with diverse characteristics. Here are some of our suggestions of several that won't rack up additional costs on your journey:

reaper.fm

lmms.io

audacityteam.org

ardour.org

soundtrap.com

www.bandlab.com

5. How do we travel, explore, and play? We suggest taking some time for this: explore the applications and programs, look at the different options, load the different recordings, adjust their volume, increase or decrease their speed, trim several, and even superimpose them to create different layers of sound. Even though there are many ways to do this work, we can use tutorials on the web to guide us, for example:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t4yjToWlic&ab_channel=MalqueStudios

6. Let's listen to the result over and over again. Are we satisfied with what we hear? Make adjustments until we are totally satisfied. It is time to save our heritage sounds. In fact, we are coming to the end of our trip.



Exhibiting

But what to do with these sounds? What is the best way to share them with others?

There is no single answer to these questions. The way in which these sounds/-noises are shared, which in and of itself is a journey, will depend on the way we want to relate to others, with the space and time we have. Here we propose some options for sharing, depending on the nature of the sound and the ways it can be displayed in museums, which will add sparkle and oomph to your noises.

Collective/individual listening

CCreate encounters that encourage active listening and in which participants can experience different ways of hearing their noises: listen while lying down, with eyes open and closed, with a speaker, or with headphones, in two different rooms, at different volumes, or in any other way that involves bodily experience.

Exhibits

Build exhibits from our noises. These exhibits produce immersive experiences that transform a space and, just like in museums, can be supported by photographs, texts, display cases, pedestals, and also other noises that facilitate interaction with others.

City tour/intervention in public space

Create listening opportunities or access to city noise that encourage listening for everyone using different amplification devices, megaphones, or even access to a virtual platform through QR codes on the street.

Applications and social networks

Today we produce and transform sounds through cell phones and computers, in such a way that it is easy to share them through Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp with our frequent contacts. There are also applications for sharing music, podcasts, and other noises in a more specialized way, such as Soundcloud, Spotify, and YouTube, among others.

Community radio

Latin America has an important network of community radio stations that, for decades, and without profit, have connected people through sound. Through AM, FM, and shortwave, these experiences have facilitated the sharing of sound/noise with communities that have difficult internet access.

Closing

After traversing, dreaming, and making noise through streets, avenues, neighborhoods, and entire cities, we found, through our bodies, memories, and the things we value the most, that sound, like the city, never ends. Our journey throughout this year led us to build a playlist of noises, from Bogotá to Quito, and back. Here you will find part of our sound experience:

Here you will find part of our sound experience:



Each person, from the place they occupy in the world and personal experience, either individually, or with the groups with which they identify, can trace one, five, or a hundred different routes through this map that never ceases to grow. We can identify new ways of listening without forgetting that a large part of the journey resides in the way we record, transform, and share our sounds/noises which, as we have realized, are nothing more than our most precious memories and experiences, representing our families and the places we inhabit and love. In this last vein, these instructions are open and

unfinished: new routes, indications, and innovative itineraries are welcome and will allow us to connect through noise to the Andes and the world.

Finally, we want to thank the individuals, groups, communities, museums, urban and community radio stations, and schools that accompanied us on every step of the way as we traced this journey.

With love and sincere thanks:

Project Team, *Los ruidos que somos:*
patrimonios sonoros de los Andes



TO FUTURE SOUND TRAVELERS

A Letter from the museum mediators who have already passed through

Listening to each other has been a revelation, one that has sensitized us and connected us with many travelers throughout the city and with their stories. We have spent several days with colleagues willing to share generously in the same adventure and part of their lives. For us, it was very important to map a route from the beginning. It sometimes changed but was always agreed upon among us all.

To make the adventure enjoyable, we made sure to build affection to feel we were safe within the group. This fostered true listening in a space of trust, generated to share the sounds that we carried in our suitcases. Sometimes these listening journeys take us to sensitive places; holding space and respect for our peers will be fundamental.

Oftentimes, the trip through the city can be overwhelming. Plenty of noises guide and, at the same time, disorient us. We must be prepared, however, to be able to capture them. Knowing well the equipment we have for recording and understanding how it works is essential for going out into the streets to capture familiar or new sounds.

Remember that sometimes there is no perfect outcome to be achieved. The destination is the journey itself. Let yourself be amazed and do not lose your ability to be surprised, to listen to every detail on this tour. There will be beautiful sunsets and nights. Enjoy the adventure because, just by living it, you will already be learning.



Project



Support



Museum network

