Columbia University has been at the helm of sound innovation for over fifty years, with faculty specializing in composition, improvisation, music theory, musicology, installation, sculpture, instrument building, acoustics, music cognition, and software development. Faculty from the Computer Music Center, along with colleagues from Composition, Visual Arts, and Engineering, led the development of the new interdisciplinary area in Sound Art that leads to the Master of Fine Arts degree awarded by the School of the Arts.

The two-year program is highly selective, offering admission to only three or four students each year. Prospective students with a deep engagement with sound as medium and a desire to join a diverse community of artists and musicians are encouraged to apply.

It is expected that Sound Art students will pursue creative work in a variety of genres and focus on the integration of sound with other media. Sound Art is a studio-based program in conjunction with the Visual Arts Program. As such, it gives the students the freedom to explore work in sculpture, video, and wood as well as computer programming, performance, and conceptual strategies. First-year students are assigned a small studio, and second-year students receive a large studio.

The Sound Art program is the only graduate sound art program in New York City. The rich New York gallery scene, including long-established art institutions such as MoMA, the Guggenheim and others, as well as independent and outdoor public sites, are in close proximity to Columbia. Discussions of these exhibitions are folded into the discussions of the contemporary practice of sound art. Individual studio visits with the Director and other faculty, visiting artists, sound theorists and curators facilitate dialogue and reveal multiple readings of students’ work. Students develop their practice in a multi-perspectival, interactive, and supportive environment and learn to conceive and discuss their own work, articulate their artistic ideas, and develop a self awareness of how their work is situated within the context of various histories, disciplines, and practices.
Full-time Faculty

Miya Masaoka (Director)
Seth Cluett (Assistant Director)
Brad Garton
Ben Holtzman
Dave Sulzer

Associated Faculty

Zosha di Castri
David Adamcyk
Mario Diaz de Leon
Paula Matthusen

Artist Mentors

Regine Basha
Jace Clayton
Matthew Ostrowski
Sara Magenheimier
Liz Phillips
Spencer Yeh

Guest Artists

Raven Chacon
Michael Schumacher
Ed Osborn
Carver Audain
Phill Niblock
Katherine Liberovskya
Cecilia Lopez
Camille Norment
Kabir Carter
Margot Norton
Galen Joseph-Hunter
Byron Westbrook
Barbara London
Mendi + Keith Obadike
Julia Christensen
Maria Chavez
Christoph Cox
DJ Spooky
Ellen Fullman
Luke Dubois
Matthew Goodheart
Nicola Hein
Jennie C. Jones
Peter Kiefer
Annea Lockwood
Pauline Oliveros
Andrea Parkins
Carsten Seiffarth
Elliott Sharp

Sound Art has transformed the way I think and expanded and solidified my ideas at the same time. I needed this safe space, and to explore new ideas in this space. The program is so intimate, but at the same time it gave me so many exploratory tools, I could take it anywhere I wanted. It was artistic freedom... Being in the program expanded my art so much, I was transformed and my art was transformed, and I will never be the same. The faculty was a dream team. It’s a great privilege to be part of the program and I learned so much from the students—the high quality of the students challenged me. It was a once in a lifetime chance to explore academia and practice, with the best tools possible.

GERÓNIMO MERCADO ‘17

K@lostrum, 2017, Gerónimo Mercado