

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## Press kit of the exhibition

„Sound Sources. Everything is Music!“

11 November 2023 - 1 September 2024

### CONTENT

Press Release

Press Release Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain

The focus of the exhibition

Soundwalk: the exhibition as an audio experience

Sound researchers and listening rooms

Sound and material culture - three examples

Mission statement Weltkulturen Museum

Terms of use for press photos and film material

Exhibition Preview 2024-2025

Weltkulturen News #9

Flyer „Sound Sources“

Accompanying booklet „Sound Sources“

Accompanying programme for after-school care and school classes

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## PRESS RELEASE

**"Sound Sources. Everything is Music!"**  
Weltkulturen Museum opens new exhibition on connection between environment, sound, man and music



Beginning November 11, 2023, the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main, Germany presents "Sound Sources. Everything is Music!".

Sounds determine our everyday lives and can be heard all around us, even in what seem to be the quietest moments. Every single place has its own soundscape, shaped by our immediate surroundings, by animals and people, by their actions and interactions. How does the setting affect the perception of what we hear? How do the environment, sound, people and music relate to each other?

These are the questions we will be asking in the exhibition "Sound Sources" - and in the process investigating the Western concept of music, too. The sounds themselves will take a starring role here, along with their cultural application, interpretation and meanings. As well as instruments, the show will contain

several exhibits that wouldn't necessarily be expected in an exhibition about music. Based on the museum's own collection, "Sound Sources" will enter into a dialogue with contemporary music and encourage visitors to reflect upon the significance of sounds in their own lifeworld.

**Curator:** Vanessa von Gliszczynski (curator Southeast Asia)

**Co-Curator:** Matthias Claudius Hofmann (curator Oceania)

**Participating artists and curators:**

Nursalim Yadi Anugerah, Bunau, Conserve the Sound (Daniel Chun & Jan Derksen), Max-Planck-Institut für Empirische Ästhetik, Gerhard Müller-Hornbach, Lasse-Marc Riek, the participants of the seminar "Sound Sources. Everything is music! Ethnomusicology and Exhibition Praxis" as well as other contributors whose names are not known.

**With kind support**



Weltkulturen Museum, Schaumainkai 29, 60594 Frankfurt am Main

Admission fees:

€7 / reduced €3.50, Free admission for children and young adults up to 18 years of age.

Opening hours:

Wed: 11am-8pm, Thur-Sun: 11am-6pm

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## Press release

8 Nov. 2023

### A journey around the sounds of the world

#### Weltkulturen Museum presents its “SOUND SOURCES. Everything is Music!” exhibition

»Day in, day out, each and every one of us is constantly surrounded by sounds. They can be loud or quiet, hard or soft, strident or subtle. The exhibition ‘SOUND SOURCES. Everything is Music!’ at the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt explores the theme of sound in a variety of ways, focusing on the relationship between the environment, sound and people as well as asking how our surroundings influence the way we hear things. The exhibition presents an extensive collection of instruments alongside some exhibits that you wouldn’t necessarily expect in an exhibition about music. Visitors can immerse themselves in the fascinating world of “SOUND SOURCES” with an audio guide that takes them on a listening trail with over 25 points of interest. There’s also an accompanying programme that promises to be highly interesting, featuring workshops and six concerts. We wish all the participants every success!«

You can find out more about the work undertaken by Kulturfonds at [www.kulturfonds-frm.de](http://www.kulturfonds-frm.de).

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**Kulturfonds Frankfurt RheinMain** was set up in 2007 as an initiative of the Hesse state government. The chief goal of this non-profit limited liability company (gGmbH) is to boost networking in the Frankfurt Rhine-Main metropolitan region and enhance the area’s attractiveness, while also documenting local artistic and cultural traditions. Kulturfonds mainly supports projects with national and international appeal but is also engaged in cultural activities that increase links in the region.

Chair of the cultural committee:	<b>Dr. Ina Hartwig</b>
Chair of the board of trustees:	<b>Prof. Dr. h.c. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann</b>
Managing director:	<b>Karin Wolff</b>
Curator and deputy managing director:	<b>Dr. Julia Cloot</b>

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# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **The focus of the exhibition**

The exhibition "Sound Sources. Everything is Music!" is all about **the relationship between the environment, sound, people and music**. Each and every place, culture and even epoch has its own sound and a unique soundscape. How do these soundscapes shape our listening habits and what meanings are ascribed to sounds, the classifications of these sounds, and music? These questions are primarily explored using examples from Southeast Asia and Oceania.

The exhibition encourages visitors to **keep their ears open on a global journey** that lets them experience a whole new world of sound. **The boundaries between sound and music are consciously blurred along the way**. In every culture, sounds are associated with a range of different meanings and classified in various ways. The term "music", which has essentially been influenced by European traditions, is just one way of classifying sound. Taking the motto "Everything is music", the exhibition creates a space for exploring diverse notions of sound and music.

Around 170 exhibits from Southeast Asia, Oceania, the Americas and Africa can be seen - and in some cases also heard - in the "Sound Sources" exhibition. The **audio guide containing 24 sample sounds and videos** is a core element of the exhibition. Not only are visitors welcome to take part in a **soundwalk** that accentuates sounds as immaterial exhibits, they can also immerse themselves in soundscapes and contemporary music in two listening rooms that have been curated by sound artist Lasse-Marc Riek and composer Gerhard Müller-Hornbach.

Sound and music cultures are best understood when they are experienced personally. So that's why the new year will bring a **wide-ranging accompanying programme featuring six concerts and regular gamelan and angklung workshops**, where visitors can get hands-on experience of the instruments. You can find the programme in the exhibition's accompanying booklet as well as online at [www.weltkulturenmuseum.de](http://www.weltkulturenmuseum.de)

Numerous **local, national and international partners** of the Weltkulturen Museum have contributed to the exhibition and its accompanying events: The Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics presents its study "Music or not?" in the exhibition, investigating how sounds are perceived and the differences in whether people interpret sounds as music or not. Visitors can even try out some aspects of the study themselves. Then there are the students at Frankfurt's Institute for Musicology, part of the city's

Goethe University, who have curated a room as part of a class project where they present their own approaches to the theme of sound sources.

The Institute for Contemporary Music (IzM) at HfMDK Frankfurt am Main is involved in the programme accompanying the exhibition, as is the Indonesian community in the Rhine-Main region and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia: visitors can take advantage of the gamelan and angklung workshops on offer, and there will be an Indonesian summer festival with music galore on 13 July 2024. Last but not least, the cooperation with Goethe-Institut Indonesien in Jakarta has led to the acquisition of several kadedek mouth organs, which will be presented in the "Sound Sources" exhibition in both their traditional and contemporary contexts.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **Soundwalk: the exhibition as an audio experience**

What really brings the "Sound Sources" exhibition alive is the interaction between visual and acoustic impressions. The audio guide included in the price of admission transforms your visit into an immersive experience. **As soon as you put on the headphones you embark upon a soundwalk through a range of sound cultures.**

The audio guide introduces an acoustic dimension to selected exhibits. These pieces of sound and music are automatically played as soon as you walk past a sound exhibit or stand in front of it. This transforms the selected sounds and music into immaterial exhibits that augment the visual impression of the material objects on show. The soundwalk is at the heart of the exhibition, consisting of 24 different examples of sound and music ranging from soundscapes and historical recordings through to pop music, contemporary music and documentary films.

Compiling these snippets of sound and music was a challenge in itself. For one thing, sound and music cultures can change rapidly. But it is also true that recordings of sound mainly tend to exist because people have attributed some sort of value or significance to them.

You can round off your audio experience in two **listening rooms**, where you will hear sound installations by sound artist Lasse-Marc Riek and composer Gerhard Müller-Hornbach. Visitors can totally engage with the soundscapes and contemporary music they hear in these spaces, experiencing them at a purely acoustic level.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **Sound researchers and listening rooms**

In **Listening room 1** sound artist Lasse-Marc Riek immerses listeners in his soundscape installation that starts off with an acoustic exploration of Frankfurt and goes on to discover specific local soundworlds from around the globe.

**Lasse-Marc Riek** is a specialist for soundscapes who uses field recordings as a means of capturing and researching acoustic ecology, bioacoustics and soundscapes. He has been active both within Germany and internationally since 1997, organising exhibitions and concerts, publishing recordings and holding talks and workshops. As co-founder of the Gruenrekorder label, which has focused on soundscapes, field recordings and electroacoustic compositions since 2001, he has worked with artists and scholars around the world.

In **Listening room 2** composer and retired professor of composition Gerhard Müller-Hornbach reflects on the application of sounds and ambient noises in contemporary music.

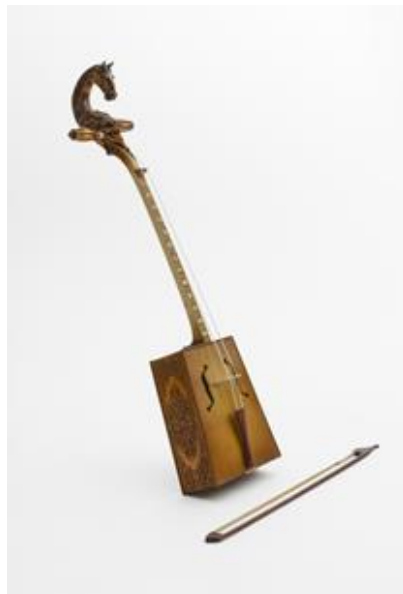
**Gerhard Müller-Hornbach** is a composer, director, educator and music mediator. As professor of composition at the Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts (HfMDK) from 1981 to 2016, he co-founded the Institute for Contemporary Music (IzM) in 2005 and remained its director until he retired and became an emeritus professor. He is the founder and artistic director of the Mutare Ensemble, with whom he has performed internationally in many different venues. Gerhard Müller-Hornbach has been the recipient of numerous awards, such as the Rome Prize presented by Villa Massimo and the Vaillant Composition Prize at the Bergische Biennale.



# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## Sound and material culture - three examples

Presenting soundscapes and sound cultures raises the question of how meaningful it is to distinguish between immaterial and material culture. The transient nature of both sound and music makes them part of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage, yet they are created on objects that belong to material culture. Tools, jewellery and musical instruments all play a very special role in material culture because they can all become a source of sound; the term 'instrument' serves merely as a supplemental concept here to aid understanding. The following three examples reflect this spectrum of sound-producing objects: the horsehead fiddle as an instrument, the shell trumpets as natural resources, and the barkcloth beaters as everyday objects whose sound is nonetheless relevant.



Horsehead fiddle, morin khuur. Ulanbataar, Mongolia. Wood, nylon. Purchased from Steve E. Morel at Uguul online shop, February 2023. Photo: Wolfgang Günzel

The **horsehead fiddle**, which can clearly be categorised as an instrument, was acquired in 2022 for the "Sound Sources" exhibition at Uguul, an instrument shop in Mongolia. Such is its importance for Mongolian musical culture that it is actually regarded as the country's national instrument. Mongolian music frequently refers to the sounds of life on the steppes, for instance by imitating galloping horses. This form of onomatopoeic references to nature is also a more general feature of instrumental and sung Mongolian music.



Shell trumpets from New Guinea and Seram, Indonesia. Photo: Wolfgang Günzel, 2022

**Shell trumpets or conches** - which are the key visual for the exhibition - are used in various contexts and produced from the shells that are found in a particular area. They are widespread in the Pacific region and are used both as a signalling instrument and in rituals. A blowhole can be made in the conch, enabling it to be blown in a similar manner to a trumpet. It produces a dull sound that carries a long way. A player can adjust the pitch by inserting their hand into the shell's opening. Today, conches are also played in orchestras and integrated into popular music genres.



Six barkcloth beaters. From Sulawesi and Alor in Indonesia and from the Marquesas Islands, Polynesia. Photo: Wolfgang Günzel, 2022

If we follow Western notions of classifying sound, **barkcloth beaters** should be regarded as tools or everyday objects rather than an instrument in the strictest sense. Yet particularly in eastern Indonesia and the Pacific region they are a key aspect of the local soundscape. Georg Forster, for example, described the vibrant soundscape he heard in Tahiti when his ship, captained by James Cook, dropped anchor off the coast in the late eighteenth century. In parts of Sulawesi (Indonesia), women can tell how far the production of barkcloth has progressed from the rhythmic pounding. The women also listen out so that they can avoid disturbing the rhythm that others make while working.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Weltkulturen Museum is an ethnological museum which is committed to interdisciplinary cooperation. It operates at the intersection of ethnology and art.

As a museum of the city of Frankfurt, it connects the local and global levels. It is engaged in an active process of international exchange with partners from indigenous cultures and non-European societies.

As a forum for transcultural exchange we promote the diverse spectrum of worldviews, historiographies, religions and aesthetics, as well as an acceptance and appreciation of the same.

We are committed to preserving, looking after and researching the collections in dialogue with their societies of origin, and with artists and scholars.

A key goal is researching provenance and critically reappraising colonial contexts.

The Weltkulturen Museum stands against any kind of exclusion or stigmatisation and seeks to contribute to processes of decolonisation.

We work together as a team to bring our projects to fruition and value the wishes and needs of our visitors.

# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## TERMS OF USE FOR PRESS PHOTOS AND FILM MATERIAL Binding Conditions of Use

### EXHIBITION

**"Sound Sources. Everything is Music!"**

**11 November 2023 to 1 September 2024**

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# WELTKULTUREN MUSEUM

## EXHIBITION PREVIEW 2024

**The dying world is alive!**

**Looking back together at the Frobenius Expedition to North-West Australia**

**1 November 2024 - 31 August 2025**

In conjunction with the Frobenius-Institut at Frankfurt's Goethe-Universität, the Centre for Rock Art Research at the University of Western Australia in Perth, and the Dambimangari, Wilingging und Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal corporations, we are taking a retrospective look at the first comprehensive ethnographic expedition to the Kimberley region of North-West Australia in 1938/39.

What is the present-day significance of the historical ethnographic collection that was acquired back then? And what does it mean for the Indigenous communities from whom the objects came? The exhibition explores the contemporary relevance of this historical collection by considering a critical history of knowledge as well as provenance research and ethnological knowledge production.

The objects being shown include copies of monumental rock art, historical paintings and ethnographic objects, supplemented by the works of contemporary Indigenous artists from the Kimberley region.

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€7 / reduced €3.50, free admission for children and young adults up to 18 years of age

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