

We use cookies to ensure that we give you the best experience on our website. If you continue without changing your settings, we'll assume that you are happy to receive all cookies on the Bowers & Wilkins website. However, if you would like to, you can [change your cookie settings](#) at any time.

[Find a retailer](#) | [Support](#)[Speakers](#) [Wireless Speakers](#) [Headphones](#) [Car Audio](#) [Society of Sound](#) [50 Years](#)[Search](#)

Blog

[Overview](#)[News](#)[Speakers](#)[Sound Lab](#)[Music](#)

Bowers & Wilkins audio collaboration with Imperial War Museum

Posted on 8 Jul 2016 | 0 comments

[Like 10](#)[Tweet](#)[G+](#)[Share](#)

Audio designer Jascha Dormann details the intricacies of the relationship with sound and exhibition spaces, ahead of Bowers & Wilkins audio collaboration with Imperial War Museum's: Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies.

Exhibition takes place from 1st July 2016 to 8th January 2017

Music

[Classic Album Sundays](#)
[Classic recordings](#)
[Competitions](#)
[Discussing sound quality](#)
[Film Soundtrack Review](#)
[Listen and you'll see](#)
[Live music](#)
[New music](#)
[Rough Trade recommends](#)
[Sleeve notes](#)
[Talking about formats](#)
[Tone Audio album reviews](#)
[Top 10 playlists](#)
[What are you listening to](#)

Blogs

[News](#)
[Speakers](#)
[Sound Lab](#)
[Music](#)

[Recent Comments](#)[Popular Posts](#)



To mark the 100th anniversary of the release of the original blockbuster, *The Battle of the Somme*, Imperial War Museum London has created an immersive exhibition to explore how film-makers have found inspiration from war's inherent drama to translate stories of love and loss, fear and courage, triumph and tragedy into movies for the big screen.

Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies explores how war has proved a profoundly compelling subject for feature films since the earliest days of cinema. Recognising that the cinema-going experience is as much about what is heard as about what is seen, IWM worked closely with Swiss audio designers Idee und Klang, as well as audio providers Bowers & Wilkins to create an immersive soundscape that underpins the visitor's journey through the exhibition.

Twenty-five AM-1 speakers, which have been used to fill the gallery with soundscapes that reflect the essential role of sound in war movies. They carry some of the most famous examples, from the mood-stirring musical scores and iconic theme tunes, to classic lines of memorable dialogue, and the shocking sounds of violence in recreated war scenes.



Jascha Dormann, audio designer and project manager at Idee und Klang explains the challenges of designing sound for exhibitions.

My two primary fields of work as an audio or sound designer are film and exhibition design. These two spheres are related in some ways and very different in others. Therefore, switching back and forth between them requires two different working modes. I have found making this switch to be stimulating as it prevents me becoming too set in my ways.

The Potential of Sound

We live in a visual world. While most people are extremely skilled in the perception, assessment and prioritisation of still and moving images, sound tends to fly under the radar. Even though well-known representatives of the movie world such

Society of Sound: Mammal Hands winter playlist

Christian Steinmayr says: Any chance you can issue these playlist also on...

35 days 18 hours ago

[View comment](#)

Album Review: Anouar Brahem – Blue Maqams (ECM)

Erwin Hattigh says: Wonderful Anouar Brahem , new album Blue Maqams ! And...

36 days 19 hours ago

[View comment](#)

Featured Recording: Slowly Rolling Camera

Slowly Rolling Camera formed in Cardiff in 2013 and brought together four wildly talented musicians from diverse backgrounds.

Available now on Society of Sound



as David Lynch and George Lucas have proclaimed sound to sometimes account for "more than 50%" of a movie experience, it is often taken for granted.



For sound creators like myself this is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand it seems to create the need to constantly explain several aspects about what I do. The benefits of an elaborate sound production on a project are by no means obvious to everybody. Neither is the amount of work that goes into it. On the other hand, it enables sound to take full effect even more. Because the subliminal nature of sound is one of its biggest strengths.

In film terms 'sound design' usually refers to everything that is not dialogue or music, meaning sound effects and noise of all sorts. But the term is very flexible as sound design and music blend seamlessly into one other.



For exhibitions, soundscapes turn venues into auditory environments that can be explored by the listener. Interaction sounds are dynamic, responding to the listener's physical engagement with exhibits or the venue itself. On top of that comes the sound for various media that might be part of the exhibition, such as films or games.

The Auditory Perspective of the Listener: Static vs. Dynamic

One of the main differences between the film sound and exhibition sound is the nature of the listener's visual and auditory perspective. When watching a film, the listener stays in the same place throughout. The screen serves as a neutral space

on which any kind of imagery can be projected. The same goes for sound: the acoustics of cinema halls are heavily dampened, neutralizing the actual characteristics of the room. On this 'auditory screen' all sorts of acoustics are being 'projected'. Various environments are being simulated around the listener by the sounds coming through the speakers. All of those sounds are panned in order to reach the listener from a designated direction.



In an exhibition context, the situation is completely different. Here, the listener is able to move autonomously. By making their way through the venue, their perspective is constantly changing both in the visual and the auditory domain. It doesn't seem far-fetched that the AROS* system developed by Idee und Klang regards sound as a part of the architecture. Soundscapes mixed for this system can be described as three-dimensional walk-in sound sculptures.

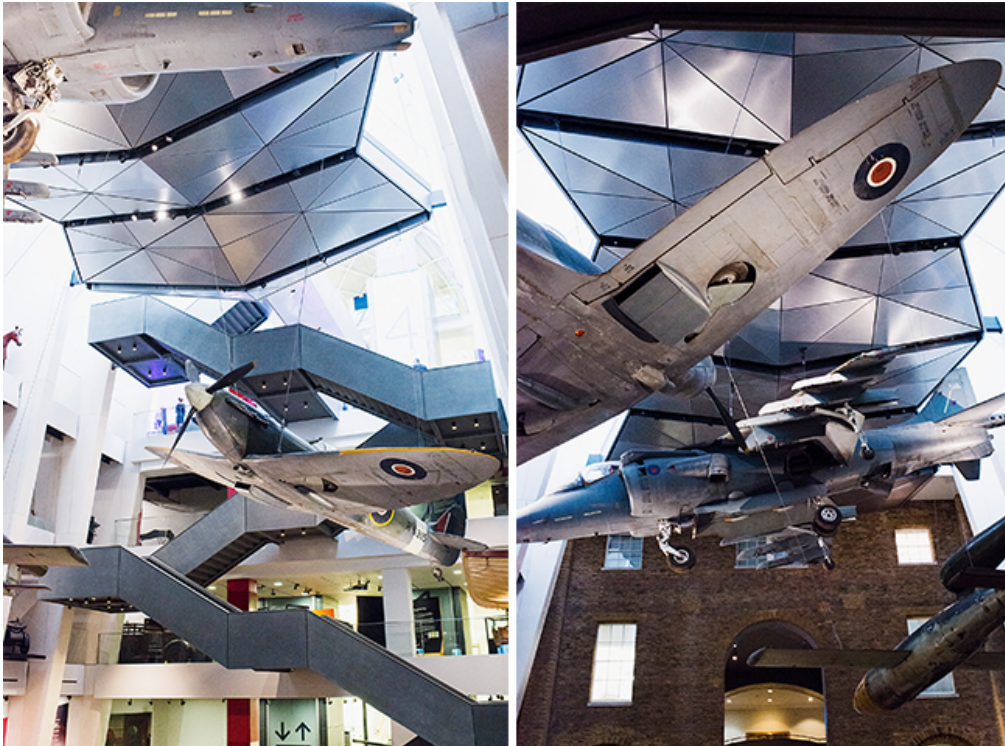
Getting a Feel for Exhibition Sound

In film sound design there are lots of conventions that have been adopted over the years. These conventions have influenced the audiences' listening habits and vice versa.

Since exhibition sound hasn't been around for that long and still isn't as widespread, there are next to no conventions. Since a lot of exhibitions are still mute, the listener isn't even necessarily expecting an exhibition to feature designed sound at all.



Nonetheless there is a huge potential in consciously designing the way a venue sounds. The creation of auditory environments ranges from subliminal ambiances that the listener might not even be aware of to spectacular three-dimensional sound stories. The absence of convention and the non-linear way listeners consume an exhibition call for the right characteristics of the sound content and, quite simply, the right volume. There is a certain risk of annoying visitors and/or staff with sound pollution. Furthermore, in many cases multiple auditory environments have to coexist without disturbing one another. This is the case if an exhibition has an open architecture or at least features multiple adjacent rooms that each has their own soundscape.



As a member of Idee und Klang, I have had the opportunity to lead the sound content production for *'Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies'* exhibition at the IWM London. We have created soundscapes that bring the sounds of film and filmmaking into an exhibition context. It has been a very interesting experience that has inspired this comparison between film sound and exhibition sound.

Jascha Dormann has worked at Idee und Klang since 2012, working on several projects including The WW1 Centenary Exhibition at Melbourne Museum or the Autowerk exhibition at Autostadt Wolfsburg.

* www.ideeundklang.com/audio/en/ideas/research/aros.html

Photos by Ania Shrimpton

Posted on: Friday, 8 Jul 2016

Categories: Music, Events, Events and shows, Hi-fi speakers

Tags: Am-1, Imperial War Museum, Jascha Tormann, P7, Real to Reel: A Century of War Movies, The Battle of the Somme

Add a comment

We welcome debate within Society of Sound, but please keep it friendly, respectful and relevant. We have a few house rules which we ask you to abide by to keep the debate intelligent. [Read more](#)

Product enquiry or support issue? [Please click here](#)

Name:

Email address: (never made public)

Comment:

//

[Comment on post](#)

Related posts



Is Blu-Ray the saviour of high-quality stereo?

It's been known for a while that Neil Young's long-awaited Archives is going to be released on Blu-ray. But now that Amazon in the ...



Steve Van Zandt's vinyl top 10

There is something very unappealing about recommendation technology. Amazon's is almost patronising in its banality and does anyone ...



Listen with Prejudice – Susanna Grant

I have been thinking a lot about listening. I don't have time to listen to music properly any more - I always seem to have a pile of ...

[Society of Sound](#) [Community](#) [Music](#) [Music](#) [Listen with Prejudice – Susanna Grant](#)

Products

[Speakers](#)
[Wireless Speakers](#)
[Headphones](#)
[Car Audio](#)

Discover

[History of Bowers & Wilkins](#)
[John Bowers](#)
[Technologies](#)
[News Blog](#)
[Music Downloads](#)
[Sound System](#)

Support

[Find a retailer](#)
[Warranty terms and conditions](#)
[Product Registration](#)
[Compliance information](#)
[Counterfeit products](#)
[Product Archive](#)
[Contact Bowers & Wilkins](#)

Follow

[Newsletter](#)
[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)
[YouTube](#)
[Blog](#)

Country Selector

[United Kingdom *](#)

** Our community content is currently only available in English.*