

## ***Vocal coattunement in the context of the psychiatric disability***

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### **Abstract:**

In my presentation I will discuss how my artistic research addresses the theme of community by its situatedness to the context of a psychiatric hospital: Helsinki University Central Hospital Department of Psychiatry (HUCH) and their inpatients. The purpose of my inquiry is to explore the possibility of a shared non-verbal voice to induce relational tendency (sensitivity) and aesthetical-ethical vulnerability (sensibility) through the practice of my vocal artwork. The key research method is an artistic technique based on the attuning tendency of voice, actualized situation-sensitively to the psychiatrically disabled people hospitalized in HUCH. 1. artistic part of my research, "Vocal Nest" (2015), was a participatory call to co-invent possibly new conditions for sensibility inside the normative space of the Psychiatry Center. 25 mentally disabled people from its closed wards sing with me in the artwork.

The question of sensibility stems from an attempt to perceive the relational register of our ways of being that becomes attuned to/in specific situations. Here I lean in the recent theorisations of the impoverishment of communal sensibility in contemporary society, which highlight the problematic relationship between semiocapitalism and mental health (Berardi 2014). In my view it is impossible to access sensibility without an artistic and bodily-affective perspective. With my presentation I propose the coattuning potentiality of sonorous voice: the moments of vocal engagement produces different registers, which hit with reality in an unpredictable way. I presume that when something happens to people in this sentient field, it has societal consequences.

Here my research opens a new field of operation between artistic and psychiatric communities/research. I will address the sub-theme of the forced minority status of the psychiatrically disabled subjects by challenging the understandings of the shattered, weakened "voice" of a mentally dis-abled person. The purpose is not to "give voice" to, or "empower", these people, but seek to create favourable conditions for diversified expressions of ones (non-verbal) voice and identities. The particular force of the polyvocal voice of Vocal Nest did not embrace the conventional norms of the psychiatric community. My argument is not that due to the semiocapitalist system mentally disabled people would have "lost their voices". Conversely, I argue that their intensive abilities for relational tendency and vulnerability to attune into non-verbal relations, emerged through Vocal Nest, suggests rather a new form of communal involvement.

I use artistic research because I assume that for being able to produce knowledge on such non-verbal and embodied registers, it is necessary to articulate them also in the form of artworks and their processes, which are not fully translatable to a written form.

In my presentation I hope to widen understandings of the coattuning capacities of this particular polyvocal matter, and, discuss human mind as vibrational – as sensibility. With my presentation I argue that these shared vocal moments come to propose new approaches of understanding mental disabilities and abilities: conditions for the creation of new subjectivities.