

Widening the spectrum*

What we want to talk about (more)

in connection to digitization, 5G, urban environments, and smart city initiatives

- We want to talk about different narratives, which oppose narratives of linear progress such as efficiency, instantaneousness, speed.
- We want to talk about the displacement of other narratives, bodies, dreams from the meta-5G-narrative.
- We want to talk about the violence of the smart city dream of digitization which is forced upon us.
- We want to talk about urban imaginaries in relation to 5G, so that the complexities and private stakes are not covered by a comfort blanket.
- We want to acknowledge heterogeneity, because there can be no common ground about smartness. We want to talk to each other acknowledging that there are radically different ontologies.
- We want to talk about collective anxieties in relation to the electromagnetic spectrum and the roots of these collective anxieties.
- We want to give voice to the marginalized.
- We want to talk more about the stakes behind smart city initiatives and their promises.
- We want to talk about the necessary skills for 5G-communicators and what other skills than engineering & radiation expertise and top-down-teaching pure science such roles might need – because it's about conflict and how we want to live together. We need to be aware that we are living in rapidly changing technological conditions with our bodies. Helpful skills needed might be healing, performing arts, (somatic) therapy, diplomacy, mediation.
- We want to talk about the differences between sensing and feeling.
- We want to talk about more-than-human electromagnetic bodies, such as plants and insects and how electromagnetic waves affect them. We want to include their stories and imaginations, too.
- We want to talk about the digital network logics that are defining smartness, because the ecology of other companion species that we share the world with such as trees or insects are very different. We want to talk about the loss of interspecies sensing, not only about productive logics of 5G.
- We want to talk about free spaces from smartness.
- We don't want to be out of the loop.
- We want to talk more about the commons: Who owns the infrastructures, who owns the Hertzian space in a city? Why is it privatized and not put into the hands of the commons?
- We want to talk about how to treat 5G spaces as commons for citizens.
- We want to talk about cities which are made for actual humans, not as markets.

* This collection of topics was created collaboratively from the outcomes of the conference *Forest of antennas, oceans of waves*, Sept. 25th 2022, Berlin by Teresa Dillon, Juan Duarte, Susanna Hertrich, Shintaro Miyazaki, Rahul Mukherjee, Bettina Katja Lange, Gabriele Schliwa, and Birgit Schneider.

**»Resonating poems« — Texts we created
from fragmented thoughts we collected at the conference**

A

We are an urban nervous system.
We are connected and entangled by smart technologies.
And by this our city became a sensing organism.
Can you feel it?

Our nervous system sees the electromagnetic field
like our eyes see the light spectrum.
If you thought that 5G is a traumatic intrusion,
we now know, that instead
our shared urban nervous system
can dream dreamful media environments.

So get connected to your antenna!
Implant your antenna to be part of the dreamful media environment!

B

We don't share a common ground,
a common ontology.
Actually, we have radically different ontologies.
Expertise, and counter expertises,
measurements and counter measurements, lead to contested world views.

Some say: »Nature must fit within the productive logics of 5G!«
Others say: »No!«
The commons are collective anxieties of electromagnetic bodies
set free by the triple invisibility
of electromagnetic communication.
What diplomats could help us
to combine anecdotes, storytelling and expertise?

C

The urban imaginary is reduced to a comfort blanket.
Do we need to refuse connection,
and oscillate between good dreams and nightmares?

Let us perform the complexities
of the new medium
instead of getting informed by them!

D

My life is hyper-normalized
I cant distinguish anymore
between sensing and feeling.

Let us summon up, then the spirits
of our EMF-infrastructure.

E

We are trapped in a continuous loop of sensing our EM Umwelt
— and there is no way out.
We cannot differentiate between sensing and feeling anymore.
It seems that we are encapsulated by Black Magic.
Is this the more-than-human environment that we asked for?

F

You are complaining that the »urban imaginary is reduced
to a comfort blanket«.
You are refusing connection.
Our dream has become your trauma.
And now you ask for artists to perform (about) the complexities
of the new medium?

G

Insects and antennas are extensions for humans.
Since I live in the smart forest, my infrastructure is telematic
having no more interaction to others

H

When I started to trust more the animal than the device
I entered the uncanny,
the unknown,
I was blind,
but this recomposition helped me to lean into the cyborg dream

I

Collective sensing, collective sensing ...
What happened with our devices?
We actually do not really
act upon them.
The city wasn't meant for us,
the city wasn't us.
Whose city is it then at all?

J

Am addressed by infrastructures in this smart city,
Is this cell antenna an extension of me or an insect?
Is this my city or a city of objects?
Should I turn to insects to learn about care and repair?

K

I dreamt about wrestling with a sensor for control, and then
was woken up by a sensor,
The optimized intelligent smart city is alienating
for some like us
Can you be more candid about this "smartness«?
Can you consider the noise of the spectral in the signals of the
electromagnetic spectrum?