

Sotto voce

...is an instruction, an imperative. A call to action. Not to speak more loudly, but to lower the voice. It is a gesture of restraint. What should I stop doing? not What should I do?

Who is speaking about whom, and how loudly? Who says how much? Who repeats themselves, who stutters, and what is being discussed? Who speaks 'well' or 'badly'? Who gossips? What is being hidden... Pa pa pa pa pa! Who is entitled to interpret?!

tacet

How can text describe a bird's song or call? Through imitation – peep peep, chip chip – or through description and translation? Sharp, chirping, quite loud?

Construction site noise, TV jingles, the rooster in the Looney Tunes cartoon, birds fluttering.

crack crack
cluck cluck
pfffff...

simile – and again

tweet tweet
chirp chirp
loco

Cigarette ends, chocolate bar wrappers, a marker pen – remnants from the studio are collected together to make birds' nests. The building site noise we mistook for a sound effect is the song of a lyrebird imitating the noise of construction work behind the adjacent fencing. The fluttering is just a pair of rubber gloves being waved about vigorously. The exhibition space emerges as an aviary where various imitations are collected. A bird show that settles somewhere between acoustic materiality and the semantic openness of sounds.

The protagonist seems trapped in his daily routine, flitting from nest to nest. With no obvious beginning or end, the repetition – the loop – evokes a state of stagnation as well as movement. It generates an image of time that expands rather than passes. The actions vary, yet always stay the same. An infinite now.

da capo

Capturing or describing something means simplifying or repeating it so that it becomes comprehensible. Notation is the graphic representation of music and sound – the aim being to bring what has been heard back into the present. It is both a document and a set of instructions.

The space itself becomes a script dictating actions and behaviours – depending on the infrastructure, the context, and our desires or hopes as we enter it. We often think that we are expressing ourselves when we do something out of the ordinary. In fact, though, we are defined by the everyday things, and routines that we imitate and repeat. At the very times we assume self-determination, we tend to be following predetermined orders and structures.

What to stop doing, rather than what to do?