



CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK



“CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK” explores the sonic ecologies of the Canary Islands, a volcanic archipelago in the North Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Northwest Africa, within the geographic region known as Macaronesia.

CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK presents an itinerary with seven compositions for headphone listening geolocated across chosen locations in Washington, D.C. Each piece is composed with environmental sound materials from each of the islands: El Hierro, La Gomera, La Palma, Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura, and Lanzarote.

This project investigates the vitality of more-than-human entities and realities, aiming to promote less anthropocentric ways of being and thinking. Through different listening strategies and audio technologies, the work concentrates on what usually remains hidden or unnoticed, on the limits and thresholds of perception and attention. The project focuses on the voices and audible presence of animal and plant species, air, soil, water, weather, and landscape formations. Furthermore, it acknowledges the affective power of sounds themselves.

CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK embraces listening as a creative act, a form of attention, and a tool to investigate the world. The project attempts to cultivate intimate sensory encounters that favour affectivity over signification and representation.

CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK is a permanent public invisible artwork available through the Echoes app from September 2021 onwards. Throughout Washington, D.C., the seven chosen locations to experience each piece of the itinerary are:

1. Theodore Roosevelt Island
2. The Fern Valley at the United States National Arboretum
3. Dumbarton Oaks Park

MUSIC
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Wed, September 22–
Tue, March 22, 2022

Venue

Various locations, Washington, D.C.

[View map](#)

Credits

Commissioned and produced by the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain in Washington, D.C. Fieldwork and production assistance: Palma E. Christian Martínez. Additional support from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), the Swedish Arts Grants Committee (Konstnärsnämnden) and the Visby International Centre for Composers (VICC). Special thanks to Garajonay National Park, Teide National Park, and Timanfaya National Park. Image by Pablo Sanz



4. Potomac River Belvedere Viewpoint
5. Glover Archbold Park
6. Kenilworth Park Aquatic Gardens Boardwalk
7. Rock Creek Park

HIERRO

- D.C. location: Theodore Roosevelt Island.
- El Hierro is the smallest and most distant of the seven main Canary Islands. Exploring its contrasting landscapes and sonic environments, the composition wanders through reverberating deep ravines, the interiors of wind-bent juniper trees, human-animal interactions, energetic trade winds blowing in deserted beaches, and the late-night wails of shearwaters nesting in the cliffs.

GOMERA

- D.C. location: The Fern Valley at the United States National Arboretum.
- La Gomera is the second-smallest of the main Canary Islands. Europe's oldest primeval temperate rainforest lies in its mountainous centre, forming Garajonay National Park. Evergreen laurel trees, ferns, moss and lichens populate the humid and foggy mountaintops, its soils continually watered through "horizontal rain." A sonic singularity heard in La Gomera is "el silbo gomero," the language of whistles developed by its human inhabitants to communicate across the island's deep ravines and narrow valleys.

LANZAROTE

- D.C. location: Rock Creek Park.
- This work centers on Timanfaya, a territory molded by its volcanic eruptions over six years in 1730-36, and again in 1824. The composition listens with other animal species that dwell around the rugged coast, endeavoring into their intimate "lifeworlds." It also traverses the aural expressions of multiple materialities, attending to crackling lava rocks, energy-making devices and ground vibrations in a zone of shallow geothermal anomalies, and to the endless flux of "intra-actions" among wind, water, and earth.

FUERTEVENTURA

- D.C. location: Kenilworth Park Aquatic Gardens Boardwalk.
- Fuerteventura is the second largest of the Canary Islands. It is known for its powerful winds and plentiful beaches. This composition focuses on wind and water, listening to their movements and influence throughout the island's coastal and arid expansive landscapes and human-made infrastructures. The piece strolls through boreholes, windmills, the nuances of the ocean's ebb and flow along with rocks, pebbles and sand, and the activities of animal species at dusk in a dry reservoir.



PALMA

- D.C. Location: Dumbarton Oaks Park.
- La Palma is one of the youngest and currently the most volcanically active of the Canary Islands. This work is based on recordings made in Garaffa, in the island's northwest, during the hottest week on record. The northern region of La Palma is a rugged continuum of steep ravines (*barrancos*), hills, forests, farmland and settlements accessible through long winding roads and pathways. The composition drifts through different sound spaces, following a 24-hour cycle, from sunrise to late night. It listens to the *grajas* (an endemic subspecies of red-billed chough), passerine birds, lizards, goats and other animals, the vegetation, the wind, and the rumor of the nearby ocean.

TENERIFE

- D.C. Location: Potomac River Belvedere Viewpoint.
- Tenerife is the largest of the Canary Islands. The fieldwork centered on the Teide National Park, a spacious territory at 2.000 meters of altitude located around Mount Teide (3.715 meters), the highest elevation in all of Spain and among all the islands in the Atlantic Ocean. This composition explores quiet, small and unnoticed sonic events, some of them inaudible to human ears, that occur throughout the expansive, seemingly immobile volcanic mountain landscape. Exploding retama seeds, ELF/VLF atmospheric noise, ultrasonic vocalizations of bats, and the sounds of insects and avian inhabitants. Furthermore, the piece includes underwater recordings made in the ocean, featuring the calls of the short-finned pilot whale and the Blainville beaked whale.

GRAN CANARIA

- D.C. Location: Glover Archbold Park.
- Gran Canaria is the third-largest and second-most populous of the Canary Islands. This composition attends to the continuous sonic flux created by a plurality of inhabitants and matters – human and other-than-human, living and so-called inanimate. Sounds from mostly unseen sources reverberate throughout the fields and *barrancos*. The fieldwork took place in the outskirts of Las Palmas (the largest city of the archipelago), in the Agaete Valley, and other areas in the northern part of the island. The piece listens to the songs of avian species (blackbird, stone curlew, birds of prey, passerines, woodpeckers), barks, howls, bleats, palm trees and other plants, the wind, machines, and everyday human activities.

INSTRUCTIONS

CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK is a location-based sound work. You will need a smartphone with an Android or iOS operating system:

1. Download the free ECHOES app on Google Play or App Store.
2. Plug in high-quality headphones. The artist does not recommend the use of



wireless Bluetooth headphones as the compression degrades the audio quality.

3. Within the ECHOES app installed on your phone, navigate to the work *CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK*. The audio artwork can run in real-time using your data plan. However, for optimal listening, it is recommended that you pre-download the entire project to your phone before setting out to the locations.
4. Follow the map feature to arrive at your chosen destination.
5. Upon arriving at the destination, the audio will begin automatically, and you can listen while walking nearby or find a spot to sit down, relax and listen fully.

CANARIAS DC SOUNDWALK is meant to be a screenless aural experience. Explore! Enjoy.

ABOUT PABLO SANZ

Pablo Sanz is an artist currently based in Spain and Northern Ireland. His body of work includes site-determined and public art projects, immersive installations, multichannel live performances in the dark, exhibitions, releases, and pieces for broadcast and headphone listening.

For more than ten years, his work has been experienced internationally in diverse contexts, such as the Museo Reina Sofía, National Music Auditorium, La Casa Encendida, Fundación Juan March, Matadero (Madrid), Phonos (Barcelona), Cafe Oto (London), STEIM (Amsterdam), ZKM (Karlsruhe), Audiorama (Gothenburg), MWW Contemporary Museum (Wrocław), APMC Sonic Environments (Brisbane), Brooklyn Acoustic Ecology Festival (NYC), and FILE Festival (São Paulo), among others. He has participated in several artist residencies, including EMS Elektronmusikstudion (Stockholm), Visby International Centre for Composers (Gotland), CONA (Ljubljana), INLAND, Académie de France in Madrid, Mamirauá Institute (Amazonas), LASOM (São Paulo), ARE Holland, and Q-O2 (Brussels).

In 2020 he received a Phonurgia Nova Award for the work *strange strangers*, commissioned by the Czech Radio. Pablo graduated from the University of the Arts of The Hague, attending the ArtScience Interfaculty and the Institute of Sonology. He holds a PhD from the Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC) at Queen's University Belfast.