Neither electroacoustic music nor sound art, in a Slovene cultural context, have been the subject of comprehensive musicological research. There is, therefore, a need for basic research and reflection on the subject itself, as electroacoustic music discourse in general notably demonstrates some sustained interpretational patterns, the most common being the technological bases which supposedly gave rise to predominant styles and aesthetics. Evidence indicates that the aesthetics and ontologies of such works were not the result of the emergence of electronic musical instruments, but rather, of phonography. The author analyses the aesthetic consequences of phonography, dividing them into categories of time, space, acousmatic experience and mimetic possibilities, and proposes that a combination of these categories, i.e., one that is inherent to electroacoustic music and sound art, forms the basis of so-called “phonographic aesthetics.” Such aesthetics are not connected only with phonographically-fixated works, but also with live electronics and algorithmic composition.

In the second and main section of the dissertation, the author presents basic historiographic research on Slovene electroacoustic music and sound art, based on forty interviews conducted with the artists, as well as extensive archival material from the artists themselves, the archives of Radio Slovenia and other sources. This research aims to be inclusive, presenting all relevant authors and their works up to year 2015, while observing continuities, relations among genres, and discussing the inherent possibilities of phonographic aesthetics. Sound art and electroacoustic music began to take shape in Slovenia, characteristically, some ten to fifteen years later than in other cultural centers. In contrast to sound art, electroacoustic music composed by Slovene artists seems to reflect more “local” characteristics, most notably in the form of persistent connections between electroacoustic composition and instrumental composition; these manifests in quantity of works combining fixed media and instrumental performance. For this reason, fixed media works comprise a smaller part of the electroacoustic canon in Slovenia than in the cultural centers of Europe. The author suggests that this may be a consequence of the “traditional” nature of Slovene musical culture; indeed, the lack of experience with the medium among Slovene composers was at least in part connected to a series of unsuccessful attempts to develop electroacoustic music studios from the late 1970’s onwards. The author uses idea of convergence – a term Leigh Landy uses to define the closing of the gap between practices such as concrete and electronic
music, acousmatic and soundscape works, as well as connections with different popular music genres.

The third section of the dissertation proposes an interdisciplinary approach to interpreting works of electroacoustic music and sound art, hereafter unified under the banner “sound works.” As the ontology of artworks which are aesthetically dependent upon phonography shifts the attention to listening as the predominant – if not the ‘sole’ – way of accessing the works themselves, factors associated with perception take on special significance. The author decided to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, drawing upon notions from the phenomenology branch of philosophy, which is characterized by an insistence upon the primacy of perception.

Categories of phonographic aesthetics are proposed and dealt with using phenomenological theories and approaches; relying primarily on Edmund Husserl's theories of internal time perception and sensomotoric space perception, ‘time’ and ‘space’ here are considered as core elements of acousmatic experience; similarly, the term ‘world’ refers to the mimetic category, and is approached using Martin Heidegger's view of artwork. Additionally, the ‘voice’ appears here as special mimetic category, but one that is unique to every subject, and therefore, which cannot be purely reduced to an object. This, and the importance of body perception, as discussed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, forms a unique perceptual situation of intersubjectivity vis-à-vis listening to the voice. With regards to the phonographic aesthetic, phenomenological interdisciplinarity seems to be profoundly connected to the listening process in both electroacoustic music and sound art. Yet, the author considers such an approach as only one of the many which may be applied in the study of this subject.

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