

Dimitri della Faille  
**CONTACT MICROPHONE WORKSHOP**

*Inspired by a series of workshops given by the experimental musical collective Kapotte Muziek/Goem (Netherlands), this contact microphone workshop will give basic information about what are such microphones, how to make them and how to best use them.*

**DURATION:** About 2 hours (basic workshop) or 4 hours (workshop and jam)

**PUBLIC:** Best with 6 to 8 persons. Aimed at sound/installations artists and musicians this workshop requires no previous knowledge about recording techniques.

**BASICS:** Contact microphones are mainly used in sound art and experimental music. Their function is very similar to “pickup microphones” used to record acoustic guitars. A regular microphone records sound through air pressure whereas a contact microphone works with vibrations. The contact microphone transforms vibrations into an electrical signal.

**WHAT ARE THEY BUILT FROM:** Contact microphones are built from a piezoelectric element usually found in different types of alarms (car alarms, buzzers etc).

**ADVANTAGES:**

- A contact microphone will (usually) not feedback.
- A contact microphone can record tiny movements and vibrations (such as insects).
- It is fairly inexpensive and easy to make.
- It has a large array of uses/possibilities.

**CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP:**

- Shorter workshop (2 hours)
  - Introduction to contact microphones and its uses.
  - Where to find piezoelectric elements.
  - Soldering session (no previous experience required).
  - Various tests and adjustments.
- Longer workshop (4 hours)
  - Same as above +
    - Looking for the right objects.
    - Collective rehearsal.
    - Public jam.

**DIMITRI DELLA FAILLE** is an experimental musician performing under the name of Szkieve. He has recorded a dozen CD's and vinyls and has performed in Europe, North and South America as well as in Asia. Born (1973) in Belgium he is now living in Montréal (Canada). In 1998, Dimitri created a record label “Disques Hushush” which has since then released over twenty CD's and vinyls from artists throughout the world. Since 2004, Dimitri has been admitted to the selective artistic committee of the ACREQ (Association for Creation and Research in Electroacoustic in the province of Québec – established in 1978). ACREQ is responsible for the organization of the Elektra Festival, the largest event of leading-edge digital culture in North America. In 2006 Dimitri completed his PhD dissertation in Sociology and has researched and published on various forms of digital arts. Contact: [dimitridf@yahoo.com](mailto:dimitridf@yahoo.com)

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

### **On location:**

- Stereo PA (any type).
- Mixer with at least four mono channels.
- Large table with seats for all participants.
- Three or four soldering irons (with solder-lead, possibly thin wire). With enough cable to reach the table(s). The iron must be of low watts (around 30 WATT not much more). This is the type usually used for electronics.
- Two pairs of (normal) scissors.

### **To be provided to each participants:**

- One mono (or eventually stereo) female audio plug ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) per participant.
- At least one meter of stereo audio cable (any quality, depending on the budget).
- One piezoelectric element (disk) per participant (comes as car or home alarms, or in other applications, ask Dimitri for further explanations. Can be bought in most, if not any electronics store).