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MEDIASCAPE

1. Global media studies invokes various approaches to media research, reflecting the increasing phenomenon of transculturally and transnational communication. If we consider news or entertainment formats, the internet or mobile communication, major or minor media – public and private communication increasingly transcends national and cultural borders. But how can we respond to this methodologically? Which innovative methods are necessary for media and communication research in a globalized media world?

Kheshti: As a media ethnographer the context of my research and the modes of communication deployed therein dictates to me what methods should be employed. Often, these methods must be invented on the spot as an organic response to a situated set of circumstances. I use skills developed in my role as a musician and as an ethnographer of the music industry to understand sound as a social text and listening as cultural production. Through the idea of "acoustigraphy" I use audio recording to ethnographically render the worlds I examine in ways that are otherwise limited by words and the written form. As a form that is imagined to be "universal," music and sound-based scholarship can experiment with the ways in which geographies are symbolically produced, embodied and consumed and/or elided.

Marks: I'm not sure how globalized media really are, for they are always experienced locally, be they bootleg movies sold in grocery stores, or online videos with tags from hundreds of different viewers, or experimental videos that show infrequently to small audiences. As anyone knows who researches marginal (experimental, independent) media in non-Western countries, it is extremely difficult to get hold of these works. One often ends up knowing about an important work only by hearsay. I must say it's not so difficult in the West with regard to artists' media, for not everybody posts their works to free web sites: you have to contact the distributor and pay a viewing fee or go there in person. So "global media" is far from a free-flowing thing.

It's necessary to go to specific places and experience media from their perspective. Ethnographic methodologies seem the most useful for describing what a media work means at the point of its arrival, as well as the materialistic formalism that I describe in my responses to other questions in this roundtable.