1. Initial Goal

To construct an HTML online and interactive sound library by collecting a series of (environmental) sounds that can be incorporated into the portrayal of Addis Ababa in the short film Bedtime Stories. Research includes how to construct your own website and how or what form of interactive platform to incorporate (e.g. the opportunity to leave comments after listening to a sound) as well as the effectiveness of particular microphones in varying situations.

2. Self-Evaluation of Process

Sound Collection

The collection of sounds has filled the foreground of my work thus far. I feel that in particular my interaction with the soundscapes in the remote environments of Tanzania has shaped my ideas further. In comparison to the recordings I made in Addis before I left to Tanzania, the technical quality of the recordings also improved. I was able to isolate specific sounds from their aural environment, or to adjust the levels of foreground sound and background sound accordingly to construct a distinction from one another. Set in a natural environment this was easier to achieve, and I am still struggling to separate sounds or to make singular recordings here in the city. The soundscapes are very layered and wide spread, so that most of the recordings I have made here so far capture a wide variety of sounds at the same time but do not present them in a high enough db ration. I am convinced that I need to capture individual sounds, which could then be layered in post to achieve a similar feeling to the overall soundscape of the city.

HTML Website

My interaction with the world of HTML hasn’t been as intensive as initially set out. I have spent time looking at online tutorials and coding techniques and have tried to write my own “trail websites” but struggle to bring it to completion. The reoccurring power cuts and the related crashing of the Internet on top of the already very sporadic and slow Internet availability has been a resistant force against my workflow.
In the process of these sometimes frustrating afternoons I began to realize that there is a distance that creeps into my work. Instead of interacting with the participants of Bedtime Stories, I sit and stare at a screen or impatiently wait for the electricity to return. My attention wanders places where it should not be. Although I think that an online sound library would be a great resource, I feel that the timing might not match my current situation. Instead, I would love to experience an "offline" more "alive" interaction with the sound collection I am building, a concept I will explore in the next section of this self-evaluation.

3. New Direction

Experiential Concept Ideas

Instead of creating an online presentation of my sound collection, I want to make room for an experiential interaction with the sounds. Keeping this in mind, I propose to frame a setting, which can take the shape of a one-day event and/or performance piece. I will use simple sound software that is available for free such as Audacity or Garage Band to shape 3-5 short soundscapes. The blind women who are participants in Bedtime Stories and their children will be invited to join and will participate in and form the experiential variable of the event. Imagine:

“A dark room. Three of the four walls are smooth and cool, the largest however is rough, textured, and radiates a certain warmth when your fingers slide across it. Your bare feet find balance on a soft and warm ground. Comfort speaks of a safe environment. The music of Teddy Afro, the Ethiopian musician you love to listen to on a daily basis, begins to fill the room. The tunes bounce from each wall and begin to loosen your body. You dance in the darkness, move, are aware of your body that is so stiff at times. Then, warmth. Gradually the temperature rises. Lights capture your shadow, which moves across the textured fourth wall. Slow at times, energetic at times, smooth at times, abrupt at times. Then the music stops. Do your movements stop too?

Sounds, so familiar, begin to fill the space. Distortions and layers make you wonder if they really are what you connect them to: The horns of the street, the wind brushing through the smell of eucalyptus trees. What does your shadow think? Does it begin to move once more or does it stand still and listens? What does your silhouette tell us about the sounds we all hear?”

I propose to record this moment. The reactions of the participants will start a dialogue between my sound collection and their perception. It constructs a safe space in which to interact with the equipment that will be present in our work together. There is room for questions, for explanations and for experimentation.
Visual Concept Ideas

The camera work that accompanies this event would focus on reaction. Visually speaking, shots of the shadow movements would predominate the imagery. I imagine close up framing and fractions of shadow imagery. The collected abstract imagery could then be edited together into a short video, which again responds to the initial sound collection.

Key/Concept Words

Layers
Shadows
Tactile/3D
Light in the Darkness

Production Plan

To begin the development phase of the event I would test the visual concept ahead of time with stand-ins. My friend Sofie has agreed to help me with the testing phase, so that she could move while I test the exposures etc.

I would need to dedicate time to find some professional lights that would be strong enough to produce clear shaped shadow figures. I will arrange a meeting with East African Film Productions to see if they might be able to lend lights to me.

Friday the 7th March – Introduction of recording equipment and camera to the visual impaired women and their children.
Monday the 10th March – Technical workshop with visual impaired women and their kids.
March 11th – 13th – Art Workshop with visual impaired women and their kids.

4. Reflection

I am happy with the development of my project. I am intrigued by how my environmental and technical circumstances can truly shape and lead my ideas. Particularly in the realm of experimental practices I am trying to stay open to new ideas and adjustments throughout the process, something that I often find very difficult once I have developed a clear concept. Being away from Vancouver and a clearly marked school schedule has helped me to consider new directions and truly embrace my new and yet so familiar environment. I like the more active character that this exploration begins to gain in its implementation with the visual impaired women and their children.