

Histories of sound practices and histories of sound objects: reflections on cross-cultural organology

My talk reflects on the critical journey that led me to write a book about one of the most fundamental musical instruments of the Arab world, the oud. I will present some of the methodological challenges of writing about such a politically-charged project, in the context of my earlier work on Palestine. And I will explore some of the culture-political affordances and consequences of working as a female musician and researcher in a predominantly male sphere. *The Oud: An Illustrated History* was published by Interlink Books (Northampton, Mass.) in 2023.

Rachel Beckles Willson is Professor of Intercultural Performing Arts at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) at Leiden University, and Codarts University of the Arts in Rotterdam. She has a hybrid professional arts practice as multi-instrumentalist, composer and scholar. Her current interests lie in artistic research, creative relationships with the other-than-human, and DIY sound technologies. These have grown out of earlier work in Hungary and the Middle East on new music, cultural imperialism and decoloniality, the cultural life of musical instruments, and activist work with people on the move. (2023).

*Eine Veranstaltung der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft,
Ortsgruppe Basel, und der Hochschule für Musik Basel*

colloquium48

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18.02.2025, 19:00 Uhr

Campus Musik-Akademie Basel, Zi 6-301