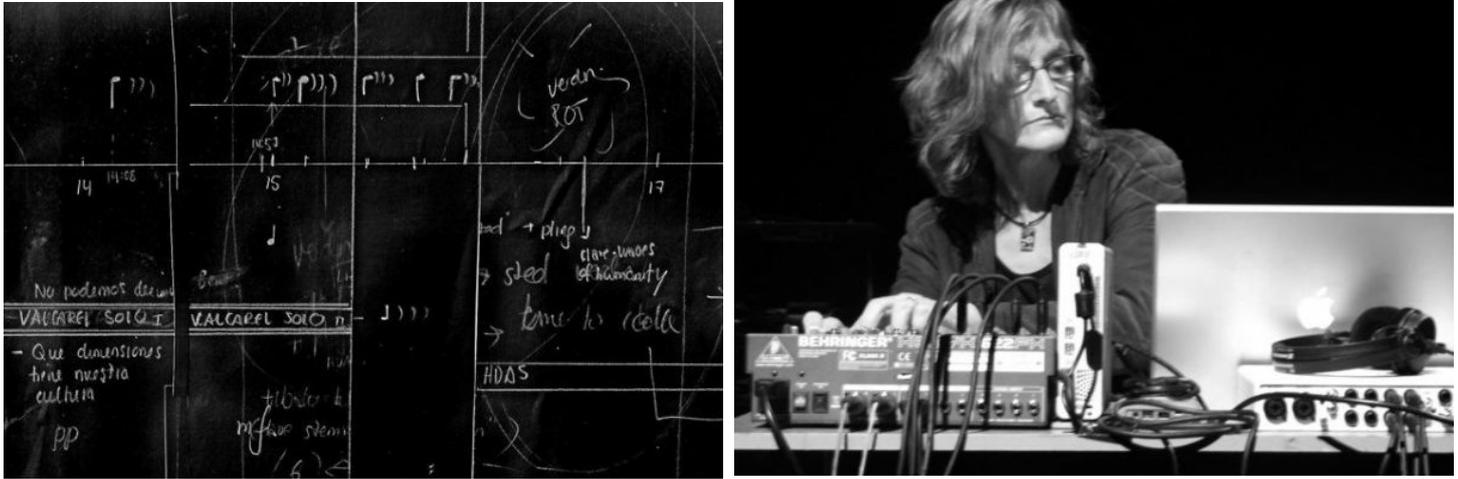


# Maia Urstad

## RCRS - Radio Canvas Reina Sofia



**Maia Urstad : RCRS - Radio Canvas Reina Sofia** Podcast commissioned by Maria Andueza

The title *RCRS* is an abbreviation for *Radio Canvas Reina Sofia*. The work continues and develops earlier investigations by Maia Urstad on themes of space and communication, this time with Museo Reina Sofia and its surroundings as the focal point.

Maia Urstad operates at the intersection of audio and visual art. Her works interrogates the history and methodology of communication technology; from Morse code and other long-range signals, to digital terrestrial networks and the use of fibre optics. Radio is a central theme in her work, using the medium for its auditory, visual and conceptual possibilities. Her work employs an array of sound sources collected all over the world: pieces of scrambled information, fragmented voices, static storms and pulsating signals. Much of this material is garnered from years of local and international radio recordings, and a key motif in her work is the use of vocal locators of time and place: announcements, news feeds, alphabet and number stations spitting data through the ether. The soundscape that these messages are located in, be it radio waves, machine hum or bustling train stations, is of great importance too, as these sites form the magnetic field that holds the messages together and adds its own particular information to the mix. Urstad's new composition *RCRS*, created specifically for Radio Reina Sofia, situates the radio station at the centre of this soundscape, and through that seeks to experience the museum from different angles, making use of recordings sampled from the RRS Museo Reina Sofia Radio as part of the work.

Ursstad explores the area around the museum through fragments from an interview conducted with Clare Butcher, a Zimbabwe-born curator, who visited Madrid in June 2011. Butcher recounts her first-hand experience of a political protest being held in the streets of Madrid - close to the Museo Reina Sofia. The inside of the building and its contents are investigated through the voice recordings of Isidoro Valcárcel Medina probing and analyzing the dynamics of the museum's collection.

Sounds are collected, transformed and then rebroadcast into the digital sphere courtesy of RRS Museo Reina Sofia Radio. The composition spins an abstract sonic world around these fragments, creating a personal interpretation of Reina Sofia, and blurring the boundaries between the museum, the city, and the world at large, through other sounds from the radio universe. Just like these transmissions traveling great distances through time and space, the work invites the listener to travel through their own imaginations, creating narratives, routes and translations of the abstracted sound.

"I am intrigued by the voice of Isidoro Valcárcel Medina - to me it inspires confidence, and radiates some kind of recognition although I have never heard his voice before. Medina's voice holds a poetry that conveys a content I do not entirely understand, as my Spanish comprehension is limited, but - it still gives me plenty of pictures. And a mood. I want to hear more - glue my ear to the radio and listen. A similar experience I do have to a Sami phrase recorded from Norwegian radio - the characteristics of the voice has some similarities to Valcárcel Medina's voice. Thai-language fragments are included in the array of voices as well, it represents to me the beauty of a language I do not understand, coming from the other side of the globe."

Some selected fragments from the RRS radio broadcast of Isidoro Valcárcel Medina :

(...) In what sense does the vertigo of our civilization go?      ¿en qué sentido va el vértigo de nuestra civilización?

(...) neither does it make it clear to us, to what extent our world is compact and stable      tampoco nos aclara en qué medida nuestro mundo es compacto y estable

(...) its not possible to conclude the dimensions of our culture      no deducimos qué dimensiones tiene nuestra cultura

(...) What is our culture playing at? Maybe nothing      ¿a qué juega nuestra cultura? Tal vez a nada.

biography Maia Urstad is an artist working at the intersection of audio and visual art. She was educated at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts and has been practicing since 1987. Integrating sound art into specific locations is one of the main ingredients in Urstad's work. Recent activities include outdoor and indoor sound installations and performances, using portable radios, CD and cassette players for both sound transmission and as sculptural objects. Her work interrogates the history and methodology of communication technology; from Morse code and other long-range signals, to digital terrestrial networks and the use of fibre optics. Radio is a central theme in her work, using the medium for its auditory, visual and conceptual possibilities. Urstad's solo and collaborative work has been presented at spaces such as the Singuhr Sound Gallery Berlin (DE), Moderna Museet (SE), Bergen Art Museum (NO), Johannesburg Art Gallery (SA), Prefix ICA in Toronto (CA), at Bryne railway station during Article Biennial Stavanger (NO) and along the Northumberland coast during a residency at ISIS Arts (UK). Urstad curates and produces art projects through her company Maur Projects, and she is one of the founders of Lydgalleriet Sound Art Gallery. She is a member of the international sound art collective freq-out, curated by CM von Hausswolff, and her soundworks are published by Touch Music [MCPS].

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