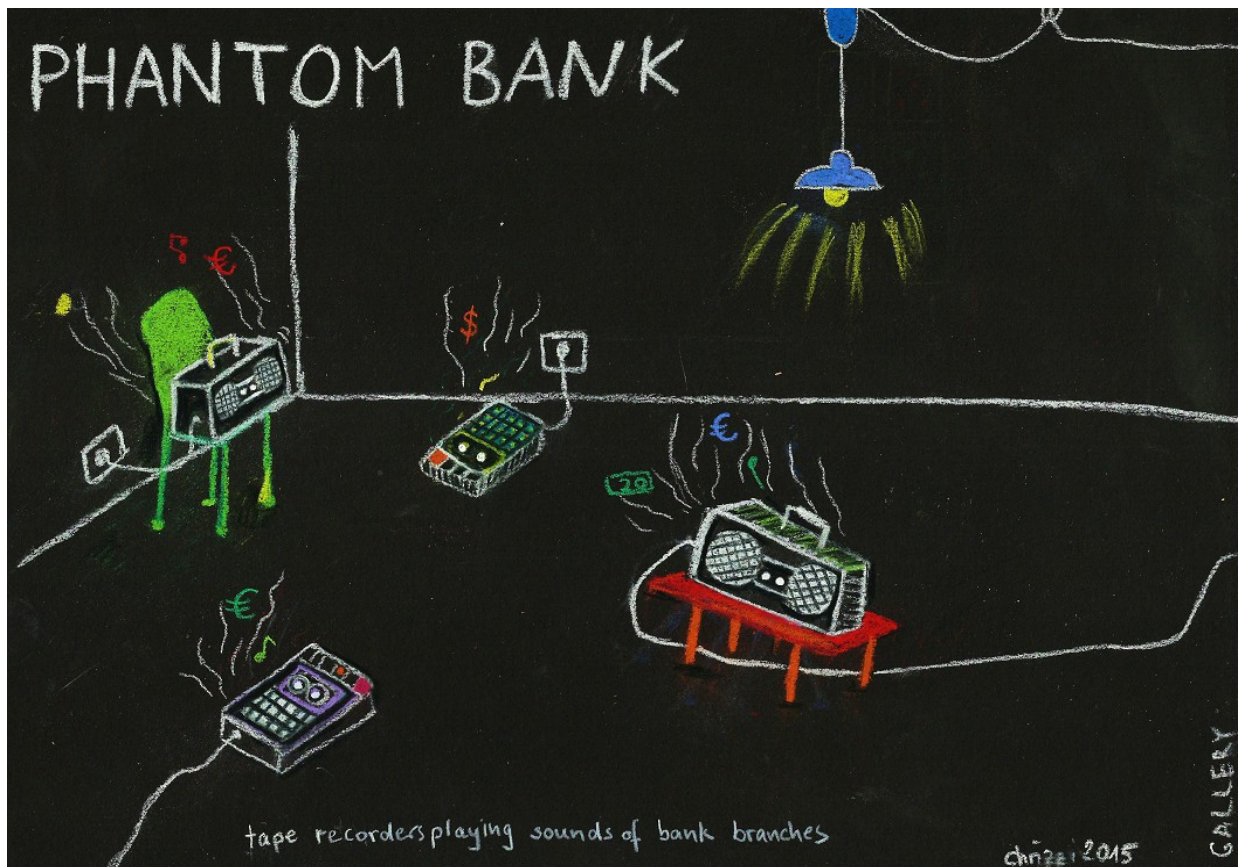




Sketch 1



Sketch 2

## **Phantom Bank.**

### **An audio project to save and explore endangered sounds of bank branches in Berlin and Brandenburg and perform them aesthetically**

*Up to the present, financial transactions have been audible but soon these sounds will disappear! The promising sounds of money being counted, which accompany the working cashpoints,<sup>1</sup> Phantom Bank's aim is to 1<sup>st</sup>, explore and save endangered bank sounds in Berlin and Brandenburg and 2<sup>nd</sup>, perform them aesthetically as part of a tape recorder interaction. Phantom Bank stages the audibility and the materiality of our financial transactions and of the financial sector in general. Considering the effects of the crisis the theme becomes even more urgent. My aim is to treat this politically relevant theme playfully and musically, using analogue tape recorders for a nostalgic aesthetic. See: [www.phantombank.org](http://www.phantombank.org)*

### **Background: Disappearance of bank branches**

No industrial sector is affected by the transformations of digitalisation to the same extent as the financial world. Bank customers migrate to the internet to use it for their financial transactions and sign contracts online instead of consulting bank officers in person.<sup>2</sup> Financial institutions use the term 'Future Banking' to lure their customers into their local branches:<sup>3</sup> Bank branches are transformed into comfy café- or lobbylike wellness spaces or modern flagship stores,<sup>4</sup> where customers are invited to enjoy a good cup of coffee.<sup>5</sup> But these future oriented concepts are already outdated as the bank branch of tomorrow is as small as a chocolate bar: a smartphone. In the near future, no one will need to walk into a bank branch to make financial transactions anymore.

### **The sound of financial transaction gets lost**

Virtual transactions also change our sensual (audio-visual and haptic) experiences connected to our performances in bank branches in our everyday life: the sound of a bank statement printer, the smell of a freshly-printed

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1 Curiously those sounds turn out as artificial results of sound design!

2 [http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/philosoph-christoph-tuercke-fluechtige-bezahlung-foerdert.1008.de.html?dram%3Aarticle\\_id=325709](http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/philosoph-christoph-tuercke-fluechtige-bezahlung-foerdert.1008.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=325709)

3 <http://neuwaerts.de/trafo/articles/2014/future-banking-filiale-mit-zukunft>

4 <http://www.der-bank-blog.de/flagship-stores-das-richtige-konzept-fuer-die-bankfiliale-der-zukunft/innovation/14145/>

5 <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/wirtschaft/filialen-der-zukunft-banken-suchen-eine-neue-strategie/8794008.html>

account statement, the sound of a cashpoint. All these represent the materiality of money we take out of the robot-like machine. These sounds and the specific visual features of bank branches in the urban landscape simply get lost. The haptic and material character of money disappears and yields a promise of an immaterial culture. But with the disappearance of the visual features the specific soundscape of these finance spaces gets lost.

### **Mapping the sounds of financial transaction** (see sketch 1)

The first aim is to collect the endangered audio-visual features of urban bank branches during an urban audio expedition in Berlin and Brandenburg. For this purpose the noises of cashpoints, account statement printers and other robotic machines for deposit cash are recorded on a digital recorder and filed. In addition, the visual features and the interior design of the inner-city bank branches will be documented in a logbook, analysed and uploaded in an audio archive on [www.phantombank.org](http://www.phantombank.org).

This audio archive of noises of bank branches provides the performative basis for an art performance. The digital files of audio material will be recorded on analogue audio tapes to emphasise the disappearing materiality of the actual sound.

### **The performance** (see sketch 2)

The collected concrete sounds of machines in bank branches becomes acoustic material for a playful and humorous Fluxus-like public audio performance using four tape recorders. It will be staged either in an empty former bank branch in Berlin and Brandenburg or in a space used as an art gallery. The art space becomes an audio bank space and vice versa: The gallery space will be pervaded with the sound of the four tape recorders that play tapes of recordings of different bank machines. The rather primitive sound technology and the experimental sound layer symbolizes the brittle qualities of the financial sector. But the fragile sounds also bring out the intimate and individual character that accompanied every financial transaction.