

Liz Sandvig Statement

I first started with words in 1996 and then moved to sonograms in 2002 although I went back and forth sometimes because I could not find sonograms for some birds and some birds have sonograms with little variation. There used to be a nature bookstore in Pioneer square that had special folders about many birds and they always included a sonogram. Then there was the Cornell website that had information but as soon as recordings of birdsongs were available most of the recordings with the sonograms disappeared. People would rather hear the song than see it.

At the time I was also making prints from photographs that were then digitized into patterns with dots. But of women or dancers not birds. I should have bought a recorder and made my own sonograms but it seemed too far away from the visual for me. And there were people like Donald Kroodsma that did it, and wrote books about it.

I really had no interest in the interior mechanics like the throat of the bird but I am always interested in the brain. There is wonderful article in the New Yorker issue of April 3rd about The crossover artist/neuroscientist/musician, David Sulzer. I would love to see the elephants playing in a band. And the part of the article about birds learning songs is amazing. The sonogram is the music and the pattern that we don't hear. Now you can have an app on your phone that will play songs of a bird and give you a picture too.

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