



mamori
artlab



Mamori Sound Project

Workshop/residency for sound artists
at Mamori Lake (Amazon, Brazil)
November-December 2007 - 2 weeks

Conceived and directed by Francisco López (www.franciscolopez.net)
Organized by Mamori ArtLab (www.malab.net)

THE WORKSHOP/RESIDENCY:



Mamori Sound Project is a 2-week workshop/residency for professional and semi-professional artists with previous experience in the area of sound experimentation and field recordings. It takes place at Mamori Lake, in the middle of the Brazilian Amazon, and involves theoretical/discussion presentations, field work and studio work. The workshop/residency has a special focus on creative approaches to the work with field recordings, through an extensive exploration of natural sound environments. It does not have a technical character but is instead conceived and directed towards the development and realization of a collective project of sonic creation with the interaction of all participant artists.

The activities of the workshop/residency include:

- Introductory theoretical/discussion presentation sessions on field recordings and sound creation, with a historical/philosophical perspective.
- Field trips (both diurnal and nocturnal) for extensive listening and recording of sound environments.
- Collective listening and discussion sessions of the sound materials gathered.
- Sessions of studio work (with laptop) using these materials.
- Development and realization of a sound piece by each participant (or in small groups), as part of the collective project.
- Public presentation of the finished pieces for both the participant artists and members of the local community at Mamori Lake.



All these activities are organized in a daily schedule according to the changing sonic environments of the rainforest. This typically involves many hours of field and studio work but there is also flexibility to allow participants to choose from several schedule options and to have the opportunity to carry out other activities related to the daily life in this environment, such as fishing for food or interacting with the local community.

The language for the workshop/residency is English. The director also speaks Spanish and has medium-level knowledge of both Portuguese and French.



Francisco López, director of “Mamori Sound Project”, is internationally recognized as one of the major figures of the experimental music and sound art scene. He is also a Ph.D. ecosystem biologist, with regular teaching activity in Spain and Latin America.

His experience in the field of sound creation and work with environmental recordings spans over a period of more than 25 years. His work has been released by more than 150 record labels worldwide and he has been awarded twice with honorary mentions at the competition of Ars Electronica Festival. He has realized hundreds of field recording projects, commissions, live performances, sound installations and workshops, as well as research in entomology and ecosystem dynamics, in 50 countries in the five continents, with a particular emphasis on tropical areas in the Americas, Africa and Australasia. He has carried out similar workshops at Mamori Lake over the past few years and has a detailed sonic knowledge on its surrounding environments.

Comments from previous participants:



“The prospect to do what one loves (in this case, sound recordings) in such a magnificent setting, under the watchful ear of someone of the high calibre of Francisco López must rate as one of the most satisfying experiences I have had in a long time. López is the perfect man for this job: absolutely at home in the dense jungle, complete with 20/20 hearing and a reference list of the most astonishing sound works you are likely to hear. I can’t recommend this workshop enough for artists seeking an richly authentic and unique creative experience.”

--- James Webb (South Africa)

"I can't say it enough how I greatly enjoyed my stay at Mamori. It is one of the most beautiful things I've ever done and I'm very grateful to all the organizers and participants. For me personally it was very interesting because this workshop was very condensed and focused on sound. Everything was so well organised in a very friendly atmosphere. I liked very much the combination lecture – field recording - studiowork - final presentation. It's a very good working formula. The knowledge and patience of Jerson [local guide] in conjunction with the great ears of Francisco were an invaluable asset for finding the great spots for the field recordings. I would highly recommend this to anyone who wants to experience new sound worlds!"
--- Arneoudt Jacobs (Belgium)

MAMORI LAKE:



Mamori Lake is one of the myriad lakes in the Amazon river. The closest city is Manaus, capital of the Brazilian state of Amazonia. The trip from Manaus to Mamori Lake is about 3-4 hours, depending on the season and the transportation, which can be directly by medium-sized boat or via a combination of minivan and small boats.



The ecosystem of Mamori Lake is a lowland tropical rainforest with lush vegetation and abundant wildlife, including an astonishing variety of fish and amphibians, birdlife, river dolphins, crocodiles, howler monkeys, etc. Average annual temperature is about 25°C, with very little seasonal variation. Days are typically hot and sunny (with maxima of about 30-35°C), cooling down if there is rain. Nights can be comparatively fresh, with a minimum temperature of about 15-20°C. Humidity is very high (around 80-90%). The dry season goes from August to December. During this season rain is occasional, but not rare, and is typically short and abundant. During the rainy season

(January to July) there is very frequent and intense rain, almost every day. Daylight is from about 6:00AM to 6:00PM, with almost no variation between seasons.

There is a small local community in Mamori Lake, scattered in small family properties around the lake, as well as a central comunal area. They live mostly on the local resources of the area, with fishing as one of their main activities. All people hired by Mamori ArtLab belong to this community and one of the main aims of the organization is to keep a constant feedback interaction with them. To this effect, Mamori ArtLab occasionally organizes educational activities with the community, public presentations of the results of the workshops, and even a soccer game (that the Brazilians invariably win).

LOGISTICS / WHAT TO BRING:



For the realization of the workshop/residency, Mamori ArtLab, the hosting organization, owns a wooden lodge on a private property by the edge of Mamori Lake, with a small boat dock. The lodge has double and triple rooms with beds, fans, and shower/toilet, as well as a large dining/studio room with tables, chairs and hammocks. It is equipped with a water tower reservoir, a generator-powered electrical system with 220V power sockets, and a hut-covered, outdoor kitchen. For the workshop/residency, there is also a small monitoring speaker system.

Food mainly consists of a fresh daily catch of Amazonian fish, from piranhas to tucunaré, the latter very appreciated in the area for its flavor. There is also occasional chicken and beef, as well as tropical vegetables and fruits. Rice, beans and tapioca flour are the most common local complements to the diet.

All transportation from/to Manaus is organized with locally-hired boat and minivan transports. Although there are a few trails in the area, the main local transportation system is by small engine-powered boats or canoes. Mamori ArtLab hires an experienced local guide/boatman that is available 24-hours for all field recording trips and any other logistic needs (including going along for a fishing experience). There is also a cook and a Mamori ArtLab logistics manager.

Like most tropical rainforest environments, Mamori Lake is home to a large number of wildlife species, some of which might be hazardous. Both piranhas and crocodiles are abundant in the waters of Mamori. However, like all wild creatures, they do not attack humans unless they are badly disturbed, and there has never been such an event in Mamori ArtLab. As is common in the whole Amazon basin, there are poisonous snakes in the area, but they are very rarely seen or encountered. Insect bites are more a daily thing one gets used to live with than a real danger. Although not abundant, there is malaria in the Mamori region, and thus medical prophylaxis and prevention against mosquito bites are important and recommended. Brazilian health authorities also recommend proper vaccination for hepatitis, yellow fever and typhus. They might ask foreigners for an international vaccination certificate upon arrival at Manaus airport.

Here is a list of necessary or useful things to bring to Mamori:

[most common things, such as batteries, sunblock or soap, can be easily find and bought in Manaus, prior to the trip to Mamori Lake]

- Sound recording/studio equipment: Participants should bring their own portable field recording equipment. It is also absolutely necessary that each one of them brings his/her own studio equipment, that is, a laptop computer with audio software that the user knows how to use, as well as headphones. Pendrives or small portable external hard disks have proven useful to transfer files between participant's computers to share files. Bring blank CDRs and DVDs for copies and back-ups and don't forget any of your necessary cables. A monitoring speaker system is available at the lodge for group listening sessions.
- Flashlights: The lodge generator is in use only during a few hours a day and always switched off at night. There are field recording sessions at night almost every day. A flashlight is thus one of the most-commonly used tools in Mamori. Head flashlights are very practical during field work. Bring plenty of batteries (they can be bought in Manaus) or rechargeable ones with charger.
- Adaptors: Power sockets in the lodge (220V) are valid for European and American plugs, but not for UK, Australia or South Africa plugs, for example. Bring your adaptors, if needed. A small power strip for your plugs is also helpful.
- Mosquito nets: The lodge is equipped with mosquito nets in the windows. However, some people prefer to bring an additional mosquito net for the bed. When inside the forest, and particularly at night, insects might occasionally be a nuisance. A head net is useful and allows to work more comfortably.
- Clothes: While inside the forest, it is recommended to wear long pants and a long-sleeve shirt, to prevent insect bites and scratches from thorns, etc. For all other situations, shorts and T-shirts are the most comfortable. Bring a bathing suit, since swimming with the piranhas and the dolphins is something we like to do at Mamori Lake. A thin jacket is not a bad idea, as some nights might feel relatively chilly.
- Rain gear: Since rain is likely to occur, even during the dry season, a light raincoat or equivalent is recommendable. A small umbrella might also be useful, including its use for covering recording equipment under different circumstances.
- Shoes: For the short hikes inside the forest high rubber boots are recommended, for both occasional mud in the trails and to prevent insect or snake bites. For all other situations, sandals are perfect.
- Sunblock and hat: During the day, and particularly while on a small boat, it might get quite hot. Sunblock and a hat are advisable.

- Water-proof bags: The combination of very high humidity, rain and life on small boats makes very recommendable to bring water-proof bags (from small plastic ones to a larger rubber one, like the ones used for canoeing) for all the electronic equipment, and even for books or clothes.
- Medicines: Every participant is responsible for taking proper health travel insurance. There is a standard first-aid kit in the lodge. In the Mamori Lake community there is a doctor but no clinic or other medical services. Bring all your necessary medication. If any participant suffers any particular illness or disease, he/she should inform the organizers beforehand and bring all proper specialized medication.

SERVICES, RATE AND APPLICATION/REGISTRATION:



The workshop/residency includes:

- Daily working sessions with field recordings, studio work, and collective theoretical/discussion presentations (total of 8 to 12 hours a day, with optional activities and flexible schedules).
- Full accommodation: 2 nights hotel (arrival/departure) in Manaus (double room, air-conditioned, swimming pool) + 12 nights cabin in private lodge in Mamori (double and triple rooms with fan and shower/toilet, large dining/studio room with hammocks, generator-powered electrical system with 220V power sockets, monitoring speaker system, kitchen).
- All meals and beverages: including daily catch of fresh Amazonian fish (piranhas, among many others), purified drinkable water fountain, juices, and occasional caipirinhas.
- Transportation from/to Manaus by boat (approx. 3-4 hours).
- Local transportation by boat to field recording sites (day and night).
- Local guide/boatman, cook, and logistics manager.

Workshop/residency 2-week rate per person: 1,500 euros.

(Includes all of the above. Does not include flight to Manaus from participant's departure location nor medical insurance.)

Mamori Sound Project is a non-profit, independently-run project. Each participant artist must seek funding for his/her workshop/residency costs, as well as the flight to Manaus and his/her medical insurance.

Application:

The capacity of the workshop/residency is limited to a small group (currently a maximum of 10 participant artists).

Artists interested need to send an application, consisting of: (i) a letter of interest, (ii) updated CV, and (iii) examples of their sound work, by post or email to the following address:

Francisco López
Apartado 5050
28080 Madrid
Spain
E-mail: franciscolopez@compuserve.com

Deadline for applications: February 15th, 2007

Registration:

The artists selected after the application process will receive a formal invitation letter from the director of Mamori Sound Project to help them in seeking funding support. To join the workshop/residency they will have to pay the fee and fill in a registration form that will be later provided by the organizers.

Deadline for registrations: July 15th, 2007

Mamori ArtLab is organized and coordinated by:
Asier Gogortza, Nacho Martí, Jordi Llorella and Marcos Ruíz.

mamori
artlab

Avda. República Argentina, 159 – 1º 2a
08023 Barcelona
Spain
Phone/Fax: +34-93-211-8354
E-mail: info@malab.net
<http://www.malab.net>

