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The "sonic turn" in recent art reflects a wider cultural awareness that sight no longer dominates our perception or understanding of contemporary reality. The background buzz of myriad mechanically reproduced sounds increasingly mediates our lives. Tuning into this incessant auditory stimulus, some of our most influential artists have investigated the corporeal, cultural, and political resonance of sound.

In tandem with recent experimental music and technology, art has opened up to hitherto excluded dimensions of noise, silence, and the act of listening. Artists working with sound have engaged in new forms of aesthetic encounter with the city and nature, the everyday and cultural otherness, technological effects and psychological states.

New perspectives on sound have generated a wave of scholarship in musicology, cultural studies, and the social sciences. But the equally important rise of sound in the arts since 1960 has so far been sparsely documented. This volume is the first sourcebook to provide, through original critical writings and artists' statements, a genealogy of sonic pathways into the arts, philosophical reflections on the meanings of noise and silence, dialogues between art and music, investigations of the role of listening and acoustic space, and a comprehensive survey of sound works by international artists from the avant-garde era to the present.