

Ambient

I am walking down a crowded street, with my headphones tucked nicely on my head. I am listening to Brian Eno's repetitive music. He is known as the creator of the so called ambient music which is a low volume music designed to modify one's perception of a surrounding environment. That sentence is true in the fact that I stop being annoyed by all the people around me and I turn inwards. I notice my own heartbeat, the way I move through the crowd; all the little details around me seem beautiful and unique. Even the fat lady eating Febo is strangely hypnotizing.

That's the thing about ambient music, as Brian Eno termed, it can be either "actively listened to with attention or as easily ignored, depending on the choice of the listener". If you listen to it in your headphones then you are alone in your own world but if it's in the background, for instance in a restaurant, it turns into elevator music. Eno used the word "ambient" to describe music that creates an atmosphere that puts the listener into a different state of mind; having chosen the word based on the Latin term "ambire", "to surround".

The importance of living in the right now, in the moment, seems to increase every day. Like Brian Eno talked about in his essay for The Long Now Foundation

"Now' is never just a moment. The Long Now is the recognition that the precise moment you're in grows out of the past and is a seed for the future. The longer your sense of Now, the more past and future it includes."

I think what he means is that we should all live in the moment because who knows what will happen in the next 5, 10, 20 years. The glaciers might have melted and we could all be living in boats. Well, I certainly don't want to be that pessimistic and I usually think about the future in a positive way. But when I start to think about this type of stuff I prefer to live myself in the moment. The dinner I'm going to eat in a few minutes, I need to clean the table first and then I might go to the bathroom. I love the fact that I don't know what is going to happen so I tend not to plan too long ahead, although I have a plane ticket back and forth Amsterdam and Reykjavik months in advance. I know that I will spend my summer in Reykjavik with my friends and family and I will probably get a work in my mothers business. I think I know those things, but they are still 3 months away. A lot of things can happen in 3 months. Making a plan gives you a false sense of security that if everything is going according to the plan then you are safe. A plan gives you also something to look forward to, then you know that you won't be stuck doing the same thing months ahead. Living in the right now while making plans is the perfect solution, to always have something to look forward to and still enjoy what you are doing in that specific moment.

Links:

<http://www.longnow.org/views/essays/articles/BrianEnoLongNow.php>

<http://www.myspace.com/ambientlegend>

<http://www.longnow.org/people/board/eno.php>