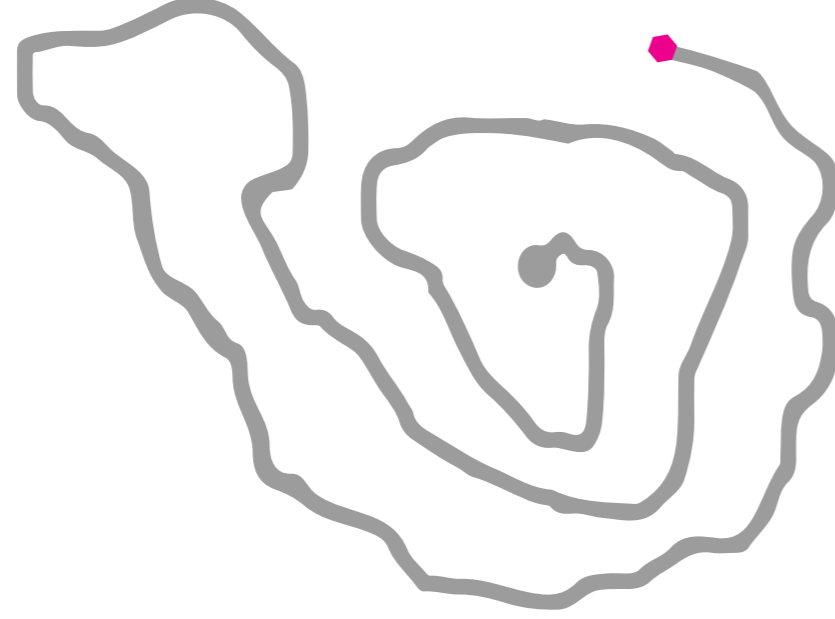


ear map



SOME SONIC EXPERIENCES OF NAIROBI

» I experience Nairobi's CBD different on a Sunday morning, maybe even special. The army of working people who sit in offices, behind shop desks and rush to lunch meetings have no reason to speed around. Businesses are closed or open later in the day and so the flood of consumers abates. Cars and motorbikes which dominate the acoustic space are almost absent.

What in turn inhabits the atmosphere are sounds which could be from a meditation compilation – bird songs, wind rustling through trees, distant conversations, a faint hum from Uhuru Highway. It is a carefully constructed composition – some sounds in the foreground and some in the back. I ask myself if they are always there and just unrecognized, or, do they appear under Sunday's circumstances. It is as if a bird would wonder whether today is its chance to finally get heard.

My mind gets some time to chill. And then at one point in the morning, I start hearing this magical harmonic hum. At first, it is very faint – I have to stand still, so the sounds of my footsteps do not obscure it. After a while it seems to rise up everywhere: Singing all around me from the various church choirs and congregations inhabiting the vacant bureaus. I walk in a harmonic hue, under a polyphonic blanket. CBD can be a transcendental place on a Sunday morning.«

by *Sophia Bauer*

» *"Hio pande ingine ya Moi Avenue, hatulipangi revenue..."*

While it can be translated differently, this Kalamashaka lyric identifies two sides of Moi Avenue that are separated by socioeconomic and political interactions. This signals spatial and imaginary boundaries and from an auditory standpoint - different harmonies that shouldn't correlate.

I tend to think that sonically, the backdrop of Luthuli Avenue is deeply situated with - among others - a distant urge to desire a sound different from other streets. The shops' acoustic instruments and PA systems, though attuned for silence and commodification, provide the street with an implied complexity of sound clashes that cannot be found in somewhere like Koinange Street for example where sonority is much less lowly clustered.

As someone who moved to the city and who recognizes it as something humongous that's of elsewhere and that which can always be exited – the reality of having not settled or recognized and coming to terms with that I'm a stranger who has spent more than half of his life elsewhere still carries an air of flight as an accompaniment.

The city's sounds remains a wonder that stays the same but is changing and different. This thinking of the city sonic is anchored in a space of curiosity and conundrum of impossible future desires. As much as it is for me to understand, my listening also looks for an epistemic transformation of some sort. «

by *Kamwangi Njue*

» A Sunday trip to the Nairobi National Park had me up and out of my house by 4:30 am. Making my way to the bus, I listened to the windy, drizzling streets as I braced the early morning chill, present in a silence that I would remember later as I walked the same path, filled with activity, on my way home.

For a pedestrian, Sunday, on many streets, is a day like any other - except since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic - during which more shops are closed on other days of the week. The combination of a struggling economy and a massive change in the daily habits of people left the usually busy streets looking like a ghost town. «

by *Brian Muhia*

» When you live in Nairobi, you always notice the quiet of other places, and a lot of healthy people long for that a bit. But that's how I feel about Nairobi since moving out. It's like a reset for my ears whenever I visit.

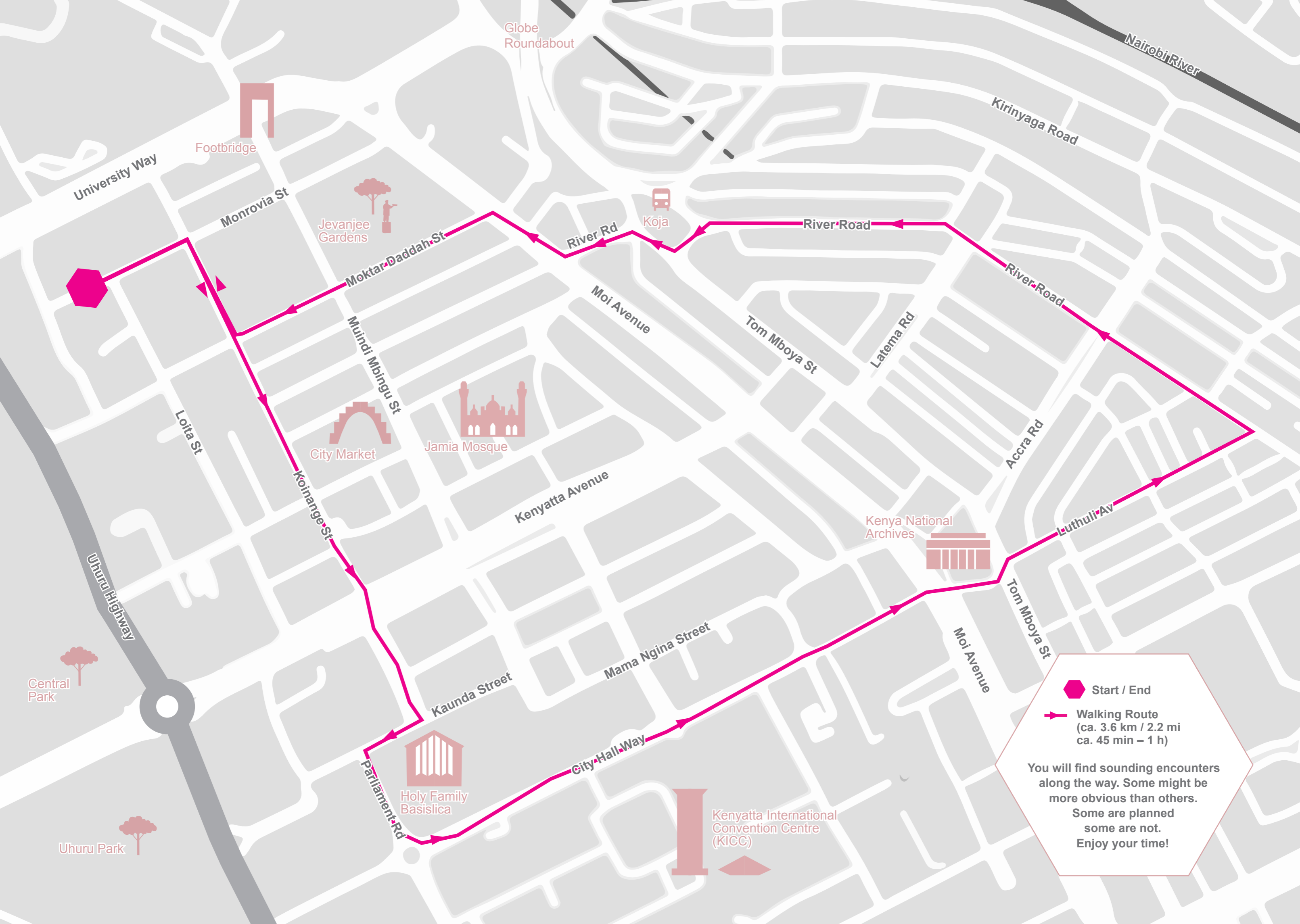
It also makes me think about ear maps. Where can I get one? I've tried tracing the route of this sound walk by recollecting the sounds along the line. This got me thinking about virtual reality for ears, something interesting to explore sometime. «



by *Raphael Kariuki*

Enjoy!

You can use your sound recorders or phones to document your walk and upload it into the [SOUND OF NAIROBI](https://soundofnairobi.net) archive (soundofnairobi.net).

This sound walk is happening in the frame work of the *Jiji Ni Ya Who?* Festival – a project by Alliance Française de Nairobi and Goethe-Institut Nairobi, funded by the Franco-German Cultural Fund.



-  Start / End
-  Walking Route
(ca. 3.6 km / 2.2 mi
ca. 45 min – 1 h)

You will find sounding encounters along the way. Some might be more obvious than others. Some are planned some are not. Enjoy your time!

Reflection card* on your **ear map** sound walk

Who is listening?

(age, gender affiliation, physical condition, mental condition, How well do you know this place?
Are you an experienced listener?)

When did you do the walk?

How did you do this walk? (alone or in a group, slow or fast, etc.)

How long did it take you?

What is the most memorable sound you can remember from the walk?

What was the most surprising sound you can remember from the walk?

What did you discover that you did not know before?

Did you record your sound walk?

Would be great if you uploaded the recording to the SOUND OF
NAIROBI archive at soundofnairobi.net. Use “ear map” tag, asante :)

*This card is for only for you! We found it to be a good experience to think about these questions after a sound walk. We would be delighted if you want to share it with us. It can be totally anonymous. You can whether leave it at the SON desk at the Alliance française de Nairobi or send a picture to our email: contact@soundofnairobi.net