

Liquid Land

By

Esteban Pérez

A THESIS ESSAY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

EMILY CARR UNIVERSITY OF ART + DESIGN

2021

A MÍ MAMÁ, XIMENA,
QUE ME HA DADO TODO.

Abstract

Liquid Land is an art thesis project informed by decolonization, and Andean Phenomenology. Working from an Ecuadorian perspective, this art project proposes alternate ways of perceiving nature as an attempt to decolonize our gaze towards the more than human world as well as move our attention to nature's subjectivity. Liquid Land proposes a slow process of learning to decenter and deconstruct the privileged hierarchy that positions the human over the more-than-human. Land, plants, and trees do not answer to the social hierarchies of power that make an imaginary land division into Nation-states and property, even though the asymmetrical matrix of power that splits land is imaginary. The exclusion and oppression are real for the people on the other side of the benefit line.

Key Words

Andean Phenomenology, Decolonization, Ecology, Indigenous Epistemologies, More-than-human, Nature, Sound.

Table of Contents

1. List of Figures
2. The View from Below
3. Immersive Sounds
4. Escuchando con el Cuerpo
5. Aeon & the Reverse Gaze
6. Living Thoughts
7. All the Frequencies at the Same Time
8. Works Cited
9. Works Consulted

List of Figures

Figure 1. América Invertida, 1943, Joaquín Torres García.

Figure 2. Bifurcación Sonora, 2020, Sculpture & Sound Installation, Esteban Pérez.

Figure 3. Intertidal Room, 2020, Soundwalk Composition, Jacek Smolicki.

Figure 4. Earth Synthesizer, 2019 Sound Object/Installation, Esteban Pérez.

Figure 5. In and out of Time, 2005, Video 4.5 hours, Terike Haapoja.

Figure 6. The Memory of Water II, 2020, Video 7:43 min, Esteban Pérez.

Figure 7. The Memory of Water II, 2020, Video 7:43 min, Esteban Pérez.

"Lucidity is the wound closest to the sun."

— René Char

The View from Below

In the middle of the 20th century, 1943, the Uruguayan artist, Joaquín Torres García created a drawing called *América Invertida* (Fig. 1) or Inverted America. The drawing illustrates an inverted version of the map of America, where South America is on the top (North) and it can be inferred that North-America is situated at the bottom. This simple exercise of inverting can come in handy for challenging everyday constructs that define our life. The map, a tool created by the colonizers to remind the oppressed who is in power, is used by Torres García in order to challenge the same structures that the map is creating. I see this drawing as a simple gesture that can disarticulate, at least for a moment, the asymmetrical power structures that we inherited from the colonization project.

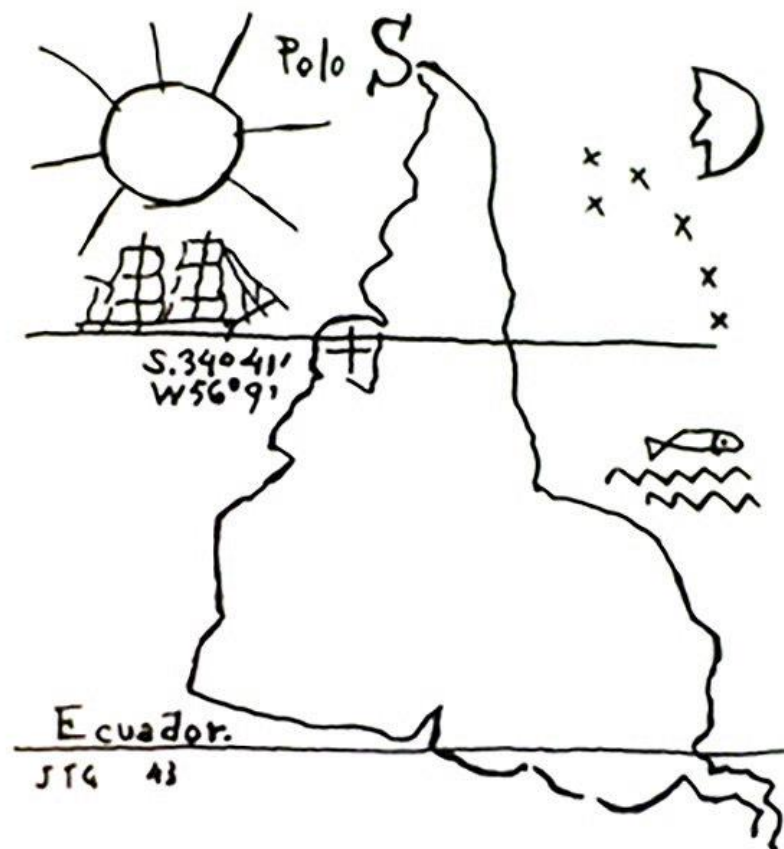


Figure 1: *América Invertida*, 1943, Joaquín Torres García.

South America, alongside Africa, is usually represented as a developing region following a teleological narrative of progress. Under this logic, a binary between “First World”¹ or developed countries and “Third World” or developing countries, is created. This narrative perpetuates a dichotomy of power that excludes the periphery from the so-called centers. My worldview is situated within this developing periphery and I will refer to this as countervisuality, in contrast to the western normative gaze.

For this reason, I do not identify with any of the labels that were imposed on me by the dominant eurocentric narrative. Nationality, race, ethnicity, class, gender, etc. are social constructs that work as a method for categorizing, controlling, and exercising power onto and over the individual subject. Beyond these imaginaries for social order, I consider myself, for lack of a better word, *human*, and I position myself on planet Earth. My process has more to do with *de-identifying* myself from these labels, rather than going towards them in search of a solid “identity”. However, for the purposes of this paper and in order to communicate my art practice and research to a broader audience, I will briefly define myself within these social constraints. Then I will explain how my research is an attempt to move beyond this anthropocentric gaze that treats humans as exceptional and as fundamentally separate from the rest of the world.

¹ As defined during the Cold War, the term first world referred to a country that was aligned with the United States and other western nations in opposition to the former-Soviet Union and its allies. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, this use of the term has largely evolved. More recently, this term has been used to describe a developed and industrialized country characterized by political stability, democracy, the rule of law, a capitalist economy, economic stability and a high standard of living. (Kenton)

I am a mestizx man, from Ecuador, South America, who is currently living and studying in Canada. I am a working-class (from a developing nation), cisgender, able-bodied, raised by a mestizx educated single mother. Because I grew up in Ecuador, a country with a considerable percentage of Indigenous population, I have always been exposed to Indigenous cosmologies, also known as Andean Phenomenology, which find their expression in the transition between worlds and levels of experience that are not perceivable to the transparency of the western view. Andean Phenomenology includes other forms of perception by attending to the invisible worlds that live within three overlapping planes: The upper sky realm (called Hanan Pacha); the middle, inner Earth realm (Uku Pacha); and the lower and outer Earth realm, which is the realm of human existence (Cay Pacha) (Gómez-Barris p. 47). This is an intricate ecological worldview from the Andes region that does not separate the material world from religious-spiritual dimensions. In other words, for Andean Phenomenology, *Pachamama* or Mother Earth, is seen as an entity with subjectivity and animacy.

My worldview has been profoundly influenced by experiencing complex and fragile natural ecosystems such as Galápagos, the jungle, the Pacific coast, and the Andes mountain range. The two concepts of nature and Andean Phenomenology merged when I drank San Pedro, a cactus that grows in the Andes. This was the first time that I positioned myself in the world and started to de-identify from social constructs. San Pedro contains a psychoactive component known as mescaline. The prehispanic civilizations used this plant in spiritual rituals. The indigenous people named this cactus after San Pedro – Saint Peter– because Peter, in the Catholic religion, is the one who holds the keys of heaven (and sometimes of hell). This

synesthetic experience helped me to visualize, feel, and embrace my position as another actant² in an extremely complex network of relationships between the human and the more-than-human world. Under the colonial matrix of power and western production of knowledge, the idea of acquiring knowledge from a plant is not rational and not possible. For this reason, I posit that this plant *shared* its knowledge with me. From this experience, I learned about my place within nature's subjective ecosystems and its planetary entangled connections.

Immersive Sounds

Even though the worldview of Andean phenomenology is mediated and historically entangled through a colonial matrix of power, it is relevant to point out how indigenous social ecologies often move beyond capitalism's inevitable commodification towards a sensibility of undivided states of being. Under these land-based Indigenous ontologies the self dissolves into the surround, which is distinct from the Western definition of psychological fragmentation. This way of being disentangles from the artificial separation of life into organic, inorganic, mobile, immobile, animate, and inanimate matter. Or as Macarena Gomez-Barris, scholar and author of the book *The Extractive Zone*, 2017, puts it.

² The actor-network theory (ANT) developed by Bruno Latour suggest that an "actor" - actant - is something that acts or to which activity is granted by other. It implies no special motivation of *human individual* actors, nor of humans in general. An actant can literally be anything provided it is granted to be the source of an action. ANT's agenda consist of the attribution of human, unhuman, nonhuman, inhuman characteristics; the distribution of properties among these entities; the connections established between them: the circulation entailed by these attributions and connections of the many elements that circulate, and of the few ways through which the are sent. (Latour p. 6)

Andean Phenomenology locates the subject in metarelational terms and blurs the binary distinctions between the human and the biomatter into porous interactivity. The self is not bifurcated between an inside and outside, and thus there is no simple divide into distinct formulations of the external other; instead, the self embraces (and is embraced by) a sensual and integrated relationality with natural elements and everything that surrounds us (Gómez-Barris pp. 40-41).

These sets of beliefs and practices based on ecological principles help us to rethink the catastrophe of late capitalism and to move toward planetary rehabilitation. This is an alternative to what she defines as the extractive gaze, which means to treat land and nature as commodities or objects that are exploited for the benefit of the settler nation's interests.

Gómez-Barris' experience in the Sacred Valley in Peru is fundamental for my investigation on embodied sound. She mentions that "by orienting toward the sonic landscape and the spatial surround, I turned away from the more unidimensional perception of the western gaze and the experience of melancholic individuality" (Gómez-Barris). Some of my most important encounters with other kinds of beings came on walks through the forest, the jungle, and the shoreline in Ecuador. During these walks, I saw/felt the natural space permeating the body through sound and my attention moved and responded to nature's subjectivity.

Informed by Andean phenomenology, my research explores more-than-visual/non-dominant ways of perceiving nature as an attempt to decolonize our gaze towards the more-than-human world. By resonating in the same frequency

with the more-than-human world all binary constructs inherited from the colonial order of being blurs. This motivates me to think beyond the colonial divide in order to create a future-oriented imaginary of the planetary place-based embodied knowledge. We need to develop a more robust relationship between human and more-than-human beings.

For this reason, it is necessary to understand that more-than-human life-forms also represent the world. And the first step toward understanding how nature represents is to discard our learned ideas about what it means to represent something. In our current time, it is urgent to stop portraying humans as separate from the worlds they represent and to move towards a monistic worldview, where both human and nonhuman represent each other simultaneously.

Escuchando con el Cuerpo³

Since I started the MFA program, two of the main components in my practice have been walking and resourcefulness. This is because of my interest in the creativity that emerges from precarious locations and situations such as we find ourselves with the COVID 19 pandemic. Also, I have been exploring sound in a very rudimentary way. Nevertheless, a strong conceptual basis allowed me to use basic sound components and recordings in projects such as [*The Earth Project*](#), [*Bifurcación Sonora*](#) (Fig. 2), and [*The Memory of Water*](#). In the last two projects, I used a portable Roland R26 Audio Recorder for recording the earth and water (river stream). These

³ Translates to English as *Listening with the body*

sounds were amplified, stretched, and manipulated via audio editing software. The studio visit that I had with sound artist and scholar Jacek Smolicki expanded my knowledge of the possibilities of field recording. He showed me a variety of microphones, hydrophones, contact microphones, as well as an 8 Chanel Recorder, and binaural headphones recorder, among others. This equipment is extremely useful, in order to create a rich and complex sound recording that encapsulates a variety of sounds from the more-than-human world in relation to human activity. The auditory quality of a recording with multiple layers of sounds aligns well with my investigation into listening to nature's ecosystems in different macro to micro dimensions.



Figure 2: *Bifurcación Sonora*, 2020, Sculpture & Sound Installation.

Smolicki's attention to sound details and his use of a variety of microphones and multiple methods for a rich sound field recording is inspiring. For instance, by incorporating the use of hydrophones or contact microphones I could expand the soundscape that I am trying to portray. An example of this could be his work [Intertidal Room](#), 2020 (Fig.3), a soundwalk composition developed in relation to the coastline near Stanley Park, unceded territory of Coast Salish peoples - Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.

The soundwalk pays attention to the ephemerality of intertidal zones, in order to notice how "people have been cultivating, affecting but also disrupting various, also imperceptible layers of these complex environments" (Smolicki 2020). His composition is intended to be listened to during a period of slack water, a moment when the tide is at the lowest point and soon about to return. Respecting luni-solar forces and the way they manifest themselves around Stanley Park, the streaming of the soundwalk has been synchronized with the times of Vancouver's low tides.



Figure 3: *Intertidal Room*, 2020, Soundwalk Composition, Jacek Smolicki.

In his own words:

The sounds featured in the piece derive from listening and field recording sessions conducted in various intertidal zones that surround Vancouver and Stanley Park in particular. Besides field recordings, the piece includes eco-responsive soundscape compositions, and two spoken narratives: one grounded in empirical, archival, and historical research and the other stemming from dreams, myths and speculative thoughts on and propositions for the further questioning of the so-called nature/culture divide (Smolicki 2020).

I am interested in his speculative approach to sound in addition to historical and empirical research. Also, by using sound a fluid, and immersive element, I am trying

to operate outside the nature/culture divide, a western imaginary that works merely within the boundaries of visibility.

During the MFA program, I have been dealing with walking and sound in fragmented ways so the concept of a soundwalk was revealing for me and my practice. I have a DIY approach to sound which translates as producing the recording in a rudimentary way. Even though from a technical perspective, my recordings might be considered naïve, this reflects motivation and drive that overcomes any technical knowledge hierarchy. In fact, not knowing allows me to explore and have an expressive and subjective approach to field recording, which usually is categorized as an objective documenting method.

My work *Earth Synthesizer* (Fig. 4) is an example of how simplicity was fundamental in the construction of an object that generated a sound when connected to the Earth. The synthesizer is connected to a speaker and through four copper cables, to the ground. The enclosure of the PCB circuit board was designed on tinkercad and then printed on a Tinkering 3D printer. I began this piece with a performance that was framed by a Squamish protocol, where Aaron Nelson-Moody, or "Splash" –sang a song in a nearby forest, and we collected earth for the Earth Synthesizer. I understood that in this new context, I needed to engage and respond with respect and gratefulness to the Earth while working with an indigenous person/artist. From that moment, I saw this material as another actant or collaborator in my work. The effort and attention of going through a Squamish protocol before collecting the Earth added a layer of meaning charged with symbols and ideologies around this material. So, the synthesizer's simplicity was

irrelevant in relation to the complexity of meanings and ideas behind the gesture of listening to this specific Earth.



Figure 4: Earth Synthesizer, 2019 Sound Object/Installation.

Aligning with the Emergent Methodology mentioned in Carole Gray's book *Visualizing Research, 2004*, I think that exposing a transparent process where I allow myself to not know, be naïve and be open to adding tools and knowledge to my projects is what creates an interesting artwork with character. The flaws of nonmastery constitute an uncommon artwork. I want to amplify these subjective flaws by using adequate recording equipment.

Aeon⁴ & the Reverse Gaze

If Smolicki's work is related to the sound part of my research, Terike Haapoja's practice informs the visual component of my investigation. Every time I find art or any creative expression that I resonate with, it is a visceral reaction. This was the case with Haapoja's work [*In and out of Time*](#) (2005). I encountered her at a conference called [*Cosmoplanetarisms: Plurilingual Translation and Ironical Exoticism*](#) convened by curator Pablo José Ramírez. In the beginning, I felt attracted to the visual language and then the object of study, the animal. She documents biological processes with technological gadgets like an infrared camera. Her interest in expanding representational forms in relation to animals, plants, and other lifeforms is extremely influential for my practice.

What interests me the most of Haapoja's work [*In and out of Time*](#) (Fig. 5) is the strong philosophical component of the video, as well as her elegant visual resolutions. The video diptych portrays a calf that has just passed away. The image on the left shows a recording of the calf as seen with an ordinary video camera. The image on the right shows the same calf, as seen through an infrared camera. The videos are in synchrony: as the body of the calf cools down, its image slowly vanishes from the infrared image. The original recording time of 7 hours is visible as a time code in lower right corner of the video. The duration of the projection is 4,5 hours. (Haapoja, 2005)

⁴ 1 An indefinite and very long period of time.

1.1 Astronomy Geology: A unit of time equal to a thousand million years.

1.2 Geology: A major division of geological time, subdivided into eras.

2 Philosophy (in Neoplatonism, Platonism, and Gnosticism) a power existing from eternity; an emanation or phase of the supreme deity. (Oxford English Dictionary)

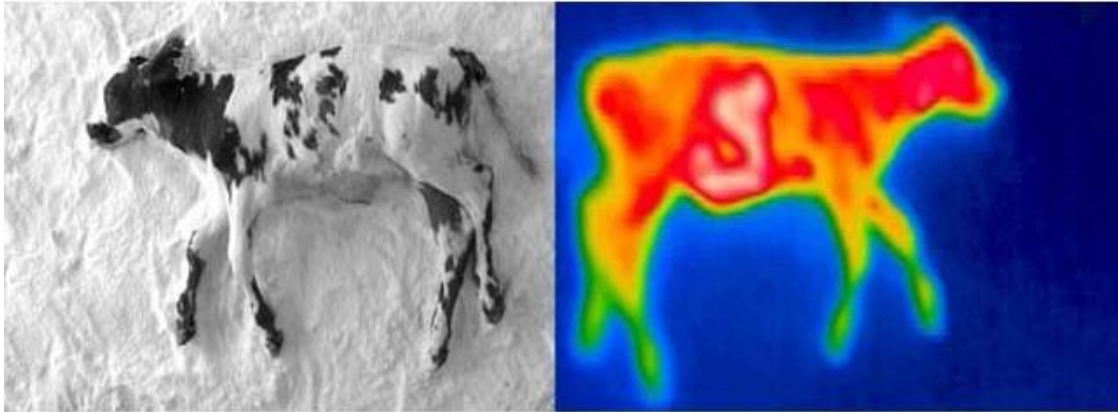


Figure 5 In an Out of Time (1-channel video installation, 2005), Terike Haapoja.

I am interested in how she approaches more-than-human experience and I relate this to my work [*The Memory of Water II*](#) (Fig. 6,7), which is a 7:43 minutes video that was recorded in Habitat Island, a park in South Falsecreek near the Seawall in Vancouver, BC, located on the unceded territory of Coast Salish peoples - Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations. The work attempts to understand how water represents the world and experiences time. Underwater frequencies were recorded with the help of a hydrophone, in order to represent the entangled relationship between human and nonhuman activity. The sound component challenges the western prioritization of the gaze which imposes an illusion of a nature-culture binary. I moved my attention to nonhuman frequencies because sound dissolves any dualistic illusion of a human/nonhuman division. This is because sound operates outside the human gaze that focus on a worldview centered on the human experience. The duration of the audio piece and a large video creates a mesmerizing atmosphere for an embodied immersive experience. The video was

projected onto a wall through a short throw projector that was sitting on a plinth in the gallery space.

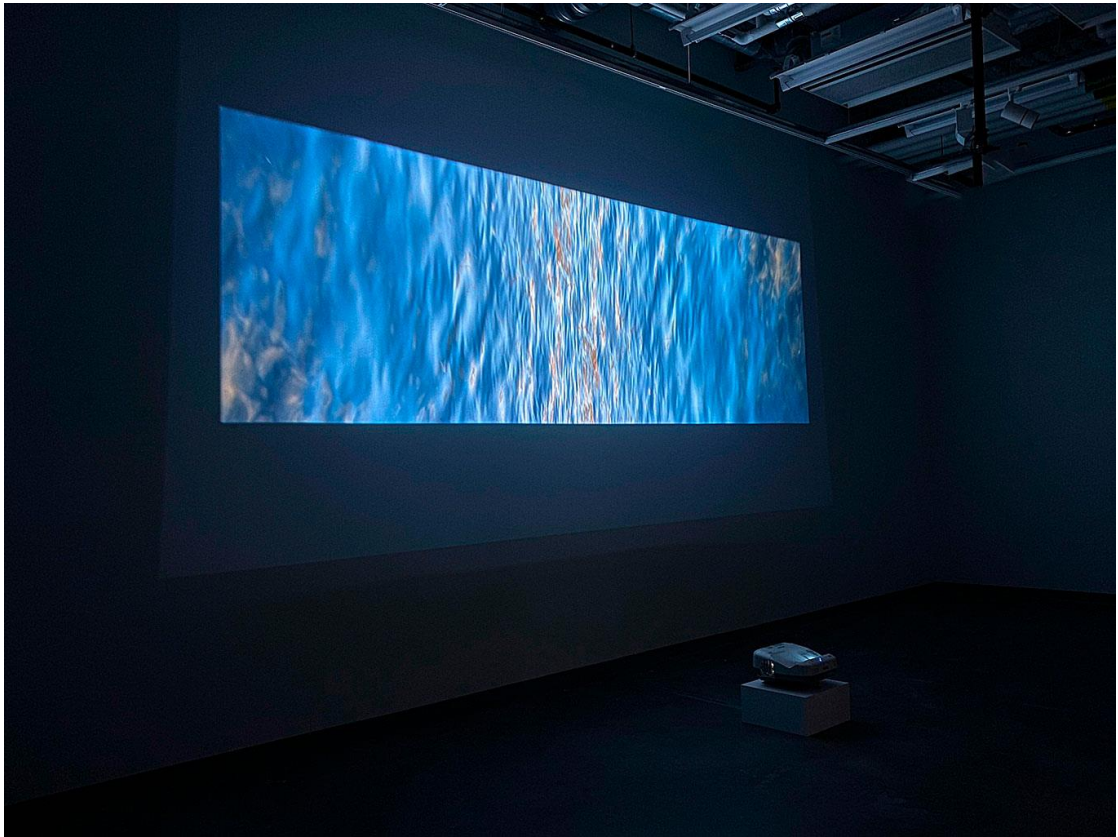


Figure 6: *The Memory of Water II*, 2020, Video 7:43min.

The video is divided into four parts. It starts with a close-up shot of mesmerizing visual effects created only by the gray water waves. The second part is a diptych presenting wider shots of water. Then, close-up images of blue tones of ocean water appear in the third part. And finally, the water is reflected horizontally.

The Memory of Water II proposes to combine an exploration of field sound recording technology with Indigenous ecological ways of knowing from Ecuador. For instance, Andean peoples call upon the apus (sacred mountains), the rivers, the rocks, animal spirits, and the lineages of ancestors in all three realms (Hanan Pacha, Uku Pacha, Cay Pacha) to support ordinary activities and the business of healing

humans. (Gómez-Barris p. 47). Inspired by the vibrancy of life that exist between these invisible realms, the project seeks to activate sound in understanding the relevance of mountains, rivers, oceans, rocks, and animal spirits, alongside which the human is just another actant into an interlinked complex world. The work is inspired by Eduardo Kohn's "anthropology beyond the human", an idea presented in his book *How Forests Think*, where he proposes to stop treating humans as exceptional or as fundamentally separate from the rest of the world.



Figure 7: *The Memory of Water II*, 2020, Video 7:43min.

Human representation is constructed in such a way that it does not acknowledge other forms of representation from nonhuman lifeforms. Usually, this happens because we humans tend to view representation as a strictly human affair (Kohn p. 38), when the contrary reality is that the more-than-human (animals, plants,

nature) also represent the world. However, this does not mean that the more-than-human represents the world necessarily as we do. My work attempts to rethink human language and its relationship to those other forms of representation we actually do share with more-than-human beings.

Living Thoughts

Eduardo Kohn's ideas are fundamental to my investigation into the more-than-human world and its representational methods. His research is situated in the tropical forests in the Ecuadorian Amazon, a place with many layers of coevolved life forms. Here, signs are not quite things because they do not "squarely reside in sounds, events, or words." He explains that signs are habits about habits. For this reason, lifeforms that "represent and amplify the habits of the world, create new habits and their interactions with other organisms create even more habits." (Kohn) These ongoing relational processes work as chain of real connections, what Kohn defines as emergent reals. Consequently, the numerous processes through which the former emerged from the latter, as well as the living minds and nonliving matter are incorporated to this vision of the real (Kohn p. 58). We, as the self-proclaimed more advanced lifeform on the planet, need to understand that being alive, or being in the flow of life, includes aligning ourselves with an expanding array of emerging habits. Then he explains how symbols are a form of representation that is unique to humans. He explains how symbols involve convention and they systematically relate to other such symbols. They are the foundation in the construction of a reality based on human thought.

I connect the term emergent habits with the emergent methodology, mentioned in Carole Gray's text *Visualizing Research*. My projects begin with an idea that comes as a blurry image. At this early phase, I do not want the blurriness to become something focused and concrete, therefore I do not make any sketches. This idea-blurry-image is vague and fluid, and is subject to fundamental uncertainties, and probabilities. Abstraction is essential to let the idea-blurry-image mutate and incorporate additional concepts and ideas along the making process. I do not want my expectations to interfere, hence I trust in the fluidity of a process based on a balance between Knowing and Not-Knowing. Which means that by letting go of everything I think I knew, to think again with an open and questioning inventiveness (Jones p. 2). This allows the idea –later called project– to mutate into the form that suits it the best. I do not believe in genius or talent, neither practice nor improvement: for me the essence of art is rather the rejection of the possibility of mastering artistic activity. Therefore, I let go of my knowledge and move my attention towards the intelligence of the material.

The artwork starts to define itself through the physical making. I relate this to Gray's definition of emergent methodology: "possible strategies for problem solving emerge through immersion in the research problem and become more focused through action. Reflection in and on action and structured improvisation are valuable to the evolving research strategy." (Gray and Malins p. 73) My process is a nonlinear emergent methodology where a rigorous theoretical investigation of Indigenous epistemologies from the Andes, representational forms of the more-than-human and sound unfolds. At the same time, there is a self-guided practical investigation on audio and video editing software, among others. Simultaneously, I

organize a field research qualitative process on a natural setting, which means going to a place and collecting information through photographs, field recordings, video, drawings, notetaking, or any other form of documentation. This is a situated and subjective production of knowledge, one also called action research.

My process also has a collective element. I acknowledge Aaron Nelson-Moody and Rosalina Cerritos from whom I received advice about the project. The result of these intersubjective relationships informs the outcome. I see these contributions of more knowledgeable people and entities as crucial for my research. This applies to both theory and practical challenges. Talking, listening, learning, and sharing information with humans and nonhumans informs immensely the artwork. Or as Kohn puts it, I am aligning myself with an expanding array of emerging habits.

Returning to Kohn's ideas, I find most relevant the need to radically rethink what representation is. For this, I personally must decolonize my own thought, to start thinking outside the frames of language, the symbolic, and even the human. I translate this to my art practice as a possibility to experiment with unconventional methods to overcome dualisms (human/nonhuman, nature/culture) to resist projecting human ways of representation onto nature. This encourages me to explore what signs look like beyond the human.

All the Frequencies at the Same Time

Many words are walked in the world. Many worlds are made. Many worlds make us. There are words and worlds that are lies and injustices. There are words and worlds that are truthful and true. In the world of the powerful there is room only for the big and their helpers. In the world we want, everybody fits. The world we want is a world in which many worlds fit.

–EJÉRCITO ZAPATISTA DE LIBERACIÓN NACIONAL, “Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle”

Marisol de la Cadena starts her book, *A World of Many Worlds*, with this quote from the Zapatistas in Mexico. The statement reveals her idea of a pluriverse where multiple worlds are existing at the same time and in the same place. For this, she points out how some earth beings or animal spirits that populate the forests can only exist in connection to that place. Besides, she emphasizes how the knowledge practices of modern scholars may perform “epistemic and ontological invalidations—or absences—of the possibility of the multiplicity of worlds that the Zapatista declaration calls for” (de la Cadena y Blaser). Another relevant term in her writing includes “Political Ontology” and it suggests a cosmopolitics among heterogeneous worlds. De la Cadena capitalizes Political Ontology to specify the imaginary that is being proposed which considers the pluriverse as a possibility and it suggests the participation of other-than-humans in political gatherings both as existents and as beliefs about nature. “The dispute about what these other-than-humans were, which depended on the relations that enacted them, composed a complex negotiation that included cultural tolerance (or intolerance) of “indigenous

beliefs” and ontological politics (through enactments of the entities in question and the denial of their being—other than beliefs)” (de la Cadena y Blaser). The result is an emergent cosmopolitics condition shaped by disagreements among contrasting worlding practices that participate in the discussion.

She also mentions how concepts are world-making tools and I relate this to my research. I think that the environmental catastrophe is a problem of imagination. This should not be confused with the use of imagination for solving problems within the dominant narrative that created the environmental problems in the first place, but rather to reimagine the dominant social narrative that establishes an extractive relation towards nature. Social construction is based on convention and this, as any other idea can be altered or molded in order to generate a different imaginary where our perception and relationship with the nonhuman world could be based on reciprocity or at least in their inclusion in the political discourses. As she mentions in the text this could be “a speculative opening, not a conclusion” (de la Cadena y Blaser). Here is where Alan Poma’s [Andean Futurism Manifesto](#) (Poma) and Rasheedah Phillips’s [Black Quantum Afrofuturism](#) (Phillips) comes into play. These authors invite us to speculate on how the ecological philosophies of Indigenous people from the Andes Region and time conceptions of African Futurism can help us imagine a future where the nature/culture binary dissolves. For instance, Phillips proposes that time is a malleable element and Poma’s work accentuates a decolonial sensibility towards technology.

Just like Torres García uses the map in order to invert its meaning and comment on the world, technology can be used in the similar ways. To decolonize

technologies with an interdisciplinary and emergent approach to different mediums, theories, technologies, and time conceptions proposes something new. According to Sara Garzon, “imperial visibility” does not simply indicate a theory of seeing and of representation; it relates, instead to the optical apparatuses that combine both the social imaginaries and technologies that make authority both perceptible and natural. In other words, visibility is an optical paradigm that brings the world into being (view) through relationships of domination, violence, and power (Garzón). In that sense, to decolonize technology is a method for challenging this hegemony of ocularcentrism by bringing into being other regimes of visibility that can yield non-anthropocentric ways of relating to the environment.

In conclusion, my research addresses the following concerns: How does the more-than-human experience time? How to manifest an embodied sonic landscape experience into an artwork? and finally, how to understand and engage with the multiplicity of voices speaking in our Pluriverse? Under these questions I produced my final thesis exhibition *Liquid Land*. This work is an installation informed by Indigenous ways of knowing from Ecuador and by ideas that Aaron Nelson-Moody aka Splash shared with me during our collaboration on the *Earth Project*. The work attempts to stop seeing nature and the forest through an extractive gaze, where nature is only a commodity and an object that needs to be exploited for capitalist profit, and instead tries to understand the complex living ecosystem of the forest where more-than-human entities, human bodies, and spirits from the past meet.

Liquid Land presents a 15:03 minutes video of a brick sculpture made from a mix of unceded territory –land from outside the school– and First Nations Land –

collected with Splash. The idea behind placing the sculpture back in the forest was to let the biological and natural processes like rain, snow, and wind, dissolve the ideological divisions embedded in the land narrative. The video presents a slow process of decomposition that forces the viewer to experience a different sense of time, a more-than-human time. Another element of the installation was a square meter of First Nations Land that was placed on the gallery's floor. This Earth component represents the extractive gaze that measures, delimits, and sees Land as property and a commodity.

In addition to the video and the Earth square, there is a sound and noise composition that works as a fluid disruptive element that transgresses measurement and spatial constraints. The sound composition operates beyond an ocular-centric logic and attempts to access the frequencies of these other vibrant invisible realms or planes (Hanan Pacha, Uku Pacha, Cay Pacha) proposed by Andean Phenomenology. The field recordings were made in the forest and then they were stretched and amplified. The sound composition attempts to access the spaces in between the three realms and to present them to the public in order to create an embodied experience of these other layers of frequencies.

In my work, I embrace multiple components of Haapoja's and Smolicki's artworks in my artistic practice. I am thus encouraged to use proper sound recording equipment and I also share Haapoja's strong philosophical basis, in addition to using elegant video resolution. However, my personal conceptual frame for some of the same inquiries in relation to the more-than-human world, time and sound are founded on Andean Futurism and Black Quantum Afrofuturism. The

ecological philosophies from Indigenous people in Ecuador see time as something predictable. Also, artist and activist Rasheedah Phillips proposes that time is a reversible element. In my work I am using concepts from both African and Indigenous Futurism, in order to posit that time is not only predictable but also reversible. These frameworks see the future as a place that does not belong to anybody. This idea creates room for change and possibility, where historically underrepresented minorities can access the future. In my own work, I expand this idea to include nature itself. Speculating on a future where Andean epistemologies enter the dominant narrative can help us all to develop a different relationship with the many distinctive voices existing on our planet.

Works Cited

- de la Cadena, Marisol and Mario Blaser. "Introduction: Pluriverse." Blaser, Marisol de la Cadena and Mario. *A World of Many Worlds*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018. 1-22.
- Garzón, Sara. "Manuel Amaru Cholango: Decolonizing Technologies." *Arts by MDPI* (2019). <<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0752/8/4/163>>.
- Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Gray, Carole and Julian Malins. *Visualizing Research, A Guide to Research Process in Art and Design*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004.
- Gustafsson, Laura and Terike Haapoja. "Imagining Non-Human Realities." Others, The History of. *Hlstory According to Cattle*. New York: punctum books, 2015. <<http://www.terikehaapoja.net/imagining-non-human-realities/>>.
- Jones, Rachel. *On the Value of Not Knowing: Wonder, Beginning Again and Letting Be*. Kettle's Yard and New Hall College . Cambridge, 2009.
- Kenton, Will. *Investopedia* . 13 9 2019. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/first-world.asp>. 27 4 2020.
- Kohn, Eduardo. *How Forest Think; Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human*. London : University of California Press, Ltd., 2013.

Latour, Bruno. "On actor-network theory: A few clarifications." *Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH* (1996): 369-381. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40878163>.

Oxford English Dictionary. *Lexico*. 10 December 2020. Website. 10 December 2020. <<https://www.lexico.com/definition/aeon>>.

Phillips, Rasheedah. *Black Quantum Futurism - Dismantling the Master's Clock(work) Universe*. 2017. Onassis Foundation. <<https://www.onassis.org/video/rasheedah-phillips-dismantling-masters-clockwork-universe>>.

Poma, Alan. "Debates ." 8 September 2020. *Colección Cisneros* . <<https://coleccioncisneros.org/editorial/debate/contribution/andean-futurism?fbclid=IwAR1tNm0ie1336HaaZh-WXVw7Wk20tkTCcNjUsLxhZMwOVfKNtu8S0q0TaQk>>.

Ramírez, Pablo José. "Cosmoplanetarisms: Plurilingual Translation and Ironical Exoticism." *International Conference*. 2018. <<https://vimeo.com/310523386>>.

Smolicki, Jacek. <https://www.smolicki.com/intertidalroom.html>. Linköping University in Sweden. *Intertidal Room* . Vancouver , 2020. Soundwalk .

Smolicki, Jacek. "Intertidal Room." cond. Jacek Smolicki. By Jacek Smolicki. Vancouver, 2020. Soundwalk Composition. <<https://www.smolicki.com/intertidalroom.html>>.

Works Consulted

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter, A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010.

Busch, Kathrin. "Rehearsing Failure ." Sabeth Buchmann, Ilse Lafer, Constanze Ruhm (Eds.). *Putting Rehearsals to the Test*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016. 130-137.

Ferguson, Russell. *Francis Alÿs: Politics of Rehearsal* . Los Angeles : University of California , 2007.

Sanzo, Kameron. *Critical Posthumanism*. 25 April 2018. <https://criticalposthumanism.net/new-materialisms/>. 20 March 2020.

Serpentine Galleries. "The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish ." *The Understory of the Understory*. Ed. Filipa Ramos, Holly Shuttleworth and Kostas Stasinopoulos. Prod. Lucia Pietroiusti. London, 6 December 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWsJXJBYJ40&t=23015s&ab_channel=SerpentineGalleries>.