

Interdimensional Broadcasting

Sonic Portals and Ancestral Knowledge

By

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fig. 1 Zoë Laycock. Sonic Portals: QTW. 2023. Video still from ritual performance.

Abstract

This thesis support document addresses the iterative installation series *Sonic Portals* that uses time-based media to explore intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Sonic Portals: QRV (2024) is a temporary structure that uses carefully considered materials – felted wool, wood, structural lashing techniques and textile layering, it is framed by two larger sculptural entities constructed of felled branches and beeswax dipped cedar boughs. Within the structure is a multichannel sound installation that gathers and synthesizes recorded media from haunted and energetically charged environments. Through processes of editing, distortion, looping, and temporal manipulation the installation invites the listener to engage with the unseen and the Beyond.

Informed by Indigenous knowledge and lived experience, *Sonic Portals* investigates interdimensional memory, material practice as haunting, and the non-linear potentials of time-based media. It discusses an artistic methodology that shifts language around media production towards acts of gathering, acknowledgement, and spiritual reciprocity. This thesis project builds places for interconnection and haunting as decolonial practice within colonial institutions.

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And to the spirit world, and the land I continue to build relationship with,
Kitchi Miigwech.

On Citational Practice & Footnotes

This thesis support document is only a small glimpse into my practice, describing aspects of the deep-rooted and interconnected methodological standards I practice; however, I am also enacting a refusal. I hold cultural and spiritual knowledge sacred, through oral sharing's from my family and community over lifetimes. I am refusing to engage that knowledge in the current institutional standard of citation, in turn this refusal allows oral knowledge to continue to be alive. I actively refuse the institutionalizing and staticizing of traditional knowledge that occurs when it is written down and housed within a colonial institution.

In this way, I continue to enact, to uphold, and to live Indigenous methodologies, I am honoured to share knowledge I hold through acknowledging my traditional protocols, conversation, and through acts of reciprocity. I am honoured to allow traditional knowledge to live within the artwork, to exist ephemerally, and to communicate through experience.

Footnotes throughout this document are used to offer additional understanding to concepts that I have named, to translations of words and to terms that I am using in ways that vary from the original or common contexts. They also contain references to memories, dreams, and other anecdotal content.

There are Works Cited and Works Consulted pages at the end of this document to find formal MLA 9th citations.

Shadows dance between realms
while spectres hold somewhere between time and space.
Long forgotten frequencies are reheard, remembered in my blood as the steady rhythm of life
cycles through the body and beyond
I can feel them, waiting, watching, guarding, guiding
I hear them, through running rivers, crashing waves, whispers in the wind, drones from the fog.
I rarely see them waking, aside from unsure glances, peripherals,
faces in the mountains I've known my whole life
In the dream realm they are broad, proud, revealed
Immense.
For what is reality when –

Introduction

“There are things in this world, we will never fully understand...Understand ” (Bagans).

Sonic Portals is an iterative series of immersive installations incorporating sound, projection, textiles, light, shadow, physical and non-physical bodies. Initiating communication to the Beyond¹ builds capacity for connection that surpasses mainstream understandings of knowledge acquisition and materialistic impressions of reality. This work challenges academia and colonial institutional knowledge supremacy by engaging with alternative modes of knowledge transmission and possessing space within a colonial institution. I establish conditions for the viewer to become an Experienter,² by manipulating perception of place and time through immersive multimedia installation. Throughout this document I consider and give name to phenomena I experience and engage with to create the thesis project.

Frequency Haunting describes an understanding of energy transmission to process relational experiences with the way the energetic residues materialize in the thesis project.

¹ I use the Beyond as an umbrella term to reference the spirit world, spectral echelon, extraterrestrial possibilities, ghosts, astral planes, the intimate and extended unknown as a prospect outside of mainstream, colonial, euro-western modes of knowledge and understanding.

² I use the term Experienter intentionally shifting from the term viewer. It is aligned with the Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon (UAP commonly understood as UFO) Experienter communities. As interdimensional portals, my installations enact the possibility to experience, to be within and apart of the work, to strengthen the understanding of interconnectedness and reject the veil boundaries implied by the term Viewer. Experienter allows for reception to the artwork surpassing the visual framework, inclusive of feeling, hearing, movement, scent, and temperature.

Frequency Haunting gives name to intuition that arises by looking backwards in linear time, describing haunting as a fluid perception across multiple spectrums. This term is inclusive of sound holding hauntings, hauntings of the body and embodied memory, and how spirits of place can shift and interact. Frequency Haunting allows the feeling of the haunt to exist as an active state of being, without the necessity to solve, but to feel comfort in not knowing. Frequency Haunting does not imply a resolved understanding but is an active query outside of asking-to-answer.

Through framing the artistic method as a cyclical process of input and output, I describe each respectively with the terms: *Cosmic Feedback* and *Interdimensional Broadcasting*. By oscillating between these processes, the thesis project centers possession³ of place and accompanying outgoing transmissions to both Experiencer and unseen entities of place.

Cosmic Feedback is a process of reflection and consideration of past and future ancestors. It relies on deep understandings of reciprocity and ancestral Indigenous knowledge of cyclical time. This holistic reciprocity is a continuous looping of feedback from entities and material technologies of the past, present and future. Continuous looping, and feedback is reflected in the *Sonic Portals* installations through reflection, mirroring projections, and audio loops built upon themselves.

Interdimensional Broadcasting is an invitation to the Experiencer, and the outgoing transmission to the Beyond. It is informed by my personal relationships of reciprocity -- Cosmic Feedback -- the result of simultaneous lifelong participation in ceremony, and engagement with

³ Possession is used by ethnographic filmmaker and scholar David MacDougall in his book, *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*, to refer to the effectiveness of blurring the boundary between viewer, filmmaker, and film – as the efficiency of captivating corporeal knowledge through the viewing and making of films. I use this term in reference to occupy and hold space with installation as a spiritual and metaphysical practice as well.

paranormal and liminal subcultures. Interdimensional Broadcasting is also influenced by my closer familial ties to music, television, and radio broadcasting traditions. *Frequency Haunting*, *Cosmic Feedback* and *Interdimensional Broadcasting* are described in more depth in the Artistic Method section.

Field research for *Sonic Portals* oscillates between ethical gathering of media travelling across Turtle Island by train and terrestrial modes of transportation strengthening my relationship to the spirits of the land. My current and ancestral relationships to Turtle Island are upheld though the transmission of traditional ceremony while on site, both where I gather⁴ media and where I build the installations. The thesis project accesses Indigenous place-based methodologies as a consideration of the physical, and with each act of ceremony, tending the spiritual ecology of place as well. Simultaneously, I develop the technical skills required to produce traditional broadcast media, while tuning in to alternative modes of communication.⁵

The final thesis iteration, *Sonic Portals: QRV* (2024) uses audio as a tool for ephemeral, liminal place building. A temporary modular structure installation created through contemporary and traditional building techniques houses the immersive sound composition. Sonic media, or sound, bridges the gap between the seen and the unseen, the real and unreal. The nature of temporal media, like sound, activates place as a conduit for Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy.⁶

Using sound as a vehicle to transport transmissions through frequencies, *Sonic Portals: QRV*

⁴ I choose the term gathering in opposition to the term “capturing”, as I consider the collection of these frequencies and media with the same reverence as I would if harvesting any other medicine or natural materials from the land and spirits.

⁵ Clairvoyance, rituals, psychic, dreams, ancient ciphers, beyond human language, ancestral consultation, blood memory, out of body remembering’s, mediumship, radio Q codes, vibrational frequencies.

⁶ I introduce Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy as a term to reference committing to experience the full time of temporal media, as a parallel to mediumship, trance, possession to access information or connection. This VSA parallels the desire to ride the train, potentially violent, dangerous droning transportation, the voluntary suspended autonomy to seek connection to place. I describe in deeper context in the Post-Production: A Reflection section.

(2024) invites the Experiencer beyond banal visual reality, to engage with a place for the metaphysical; extending an invitation to the Beyond. My research through Sonic Portals asks the following: How can invitation and acknowledgement frame an experience? How might connection to place allow for interdimensional transmissions? How might we support alternative modes of time within institutional spaces?

I dance with them. (A positionality)

I am privileged to be raised with a strong connection to Saulteaux/Métis culture. As a part of the urban Indigenous community, I continue a lifelong practice of ceremony. Due to the nature of my family's Indigenous run non-profit organization, my worldview has been impacted by strong values for community, cultural accessibility, decolonial modes of governance, and honouring traditional protocols. I am gifted and grateful to have had strong relationships to each of my grandparents well into my teen years, three of whom have since passed. Although my homebase was Calgary, Alberta. I spent much of my childhood in the bush, on the land, in the lakes, rivers, foothills, in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains, and on the road. It was not uncommon for impromptu family road trips, pilgrimages with purpose – Pipestone Minnesota, Devil's Tower Wyoming, through familial communities in southern Manitoba and beyond. These trips would continue to maintain a stronghold, connecting me with family, with culture, with the ancestral land.

I investigate how installation, sound, projection, and performance can enhance or critique the relationships I maintain with ancestors, the land, and spirits, both human and beyond-human. The thesis project is informed by my unique and intimate relationship to music, audio production and broadcasting. Both my parents had worked in television broadcasting. My dad, all through my childhood and up until recent years, worked as a free-lance camera man, filming hockey games, the Calgary Stampede Rodeo, multiple winter Olympics and other sporting events.⁷ I was often brought along, behind the scenes of these large media broadcasting productions. Our home always had access to still and video cameras, microphones, amps, and instruments.

⁷ He also taught broadcasting at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology; I would visit the campus with him as a child.



fig. 2 Pictured Zoë Laycock. Family photo circa 2002.⁸

My mom is also a singer songwriter, and as a child many of my weekends in the city were spent listening to the sound of muffled recording sessions in the basement. Prior to their time in tele-broadcasting and to my arrival, my parents toured with a band, my mom the lead vocalist, my dad, the band's sound man. Writing, recording, and producing music has always been a part of my life. The door to my childhood room in their basement, opens to a fully equipped recording studio to this day. My patrilineal Granddad was a ham radio enthusiast, raising my father while mastering radio frequencies and communications. My matrilineal Grandpa Teddy Boy was a world-renowned old-time Métis fiddle player, traveling the world and sharing his love

⁸ This photo was taken in Kananaskis Country, AB, under the watch of Mount Yamnuska. This is the site of many sweat lodges, my parents' tipi where we would spend weekends ¾ seasons, and many other familial and closed community ceremonies. My family and I would scatter my Grandpa Teddy Boys ashes here in 2021.

for music, and the understanding that those musical frequencies hold knowledge and culture throughout the ages. My understanding of the transmission of knowledge across dimensions, through ages of technical and sonic media has a deep-rooted foundation in lifelong learning as well as familial embodied memory, or blood memory (Mithlo).

Through the thesis project I honour my individual contemporary cultural identity living through experiences as a fringe dweller. My body often feels incongruous in space. Being too visibly white for acceptance by Indigenous peers, while too culturally Indigenous to be accepted by white peers, acceptance in outlier circles was always a certainty. I connected with *nerd and heavy metal culture*, I believe(d) in space aliens, and ghosts, and sea monsters, and my cultural upbringing doesn't deny the potential for those beliefs. I believe in the Little People, Sa'be,⁹ Star People and Thunderbirds. The borderlines of what I choose to share is isolating, it is the balance of keeping my spirit safe, while also my community's spirituality safe. As a cis-hetero-passing two-spirit fem, and working in community frontline for many years, has made my boundaries strong; the state of my own being is rarely disclosed out of self-preservation.

Through the multitude of community and facets of being, I continue wayfinding, navigating a simultaneous reveal and un-reveal exploring the fluidity between spaces of invisibility and presences.

Activating the spaces in between the seen and the unseen.

⁹ Sa'be is the Anishinaabe word for the Sasquatch spirit.

Broadcast # 1 - Sonic Portals: QRV (2024).

The thesis project final installation is a 22-minute quadrophonic, immersive sound composition, housed within an octagonal lodge structure, with entity sculptures hanging 12-15 feet above as portal guardians, acting as transmission antennae.

The tent structure is 8' in diameter and roughly 6' tall. The frame is constructed from CNC router cut plywood ribs, lumber, ethically gathered alder trees, leather, with steel brackets and hardware. The lodges outer skin is muslin fabric, with linocut print portholes that reference the thirteen moon cycles, the inner

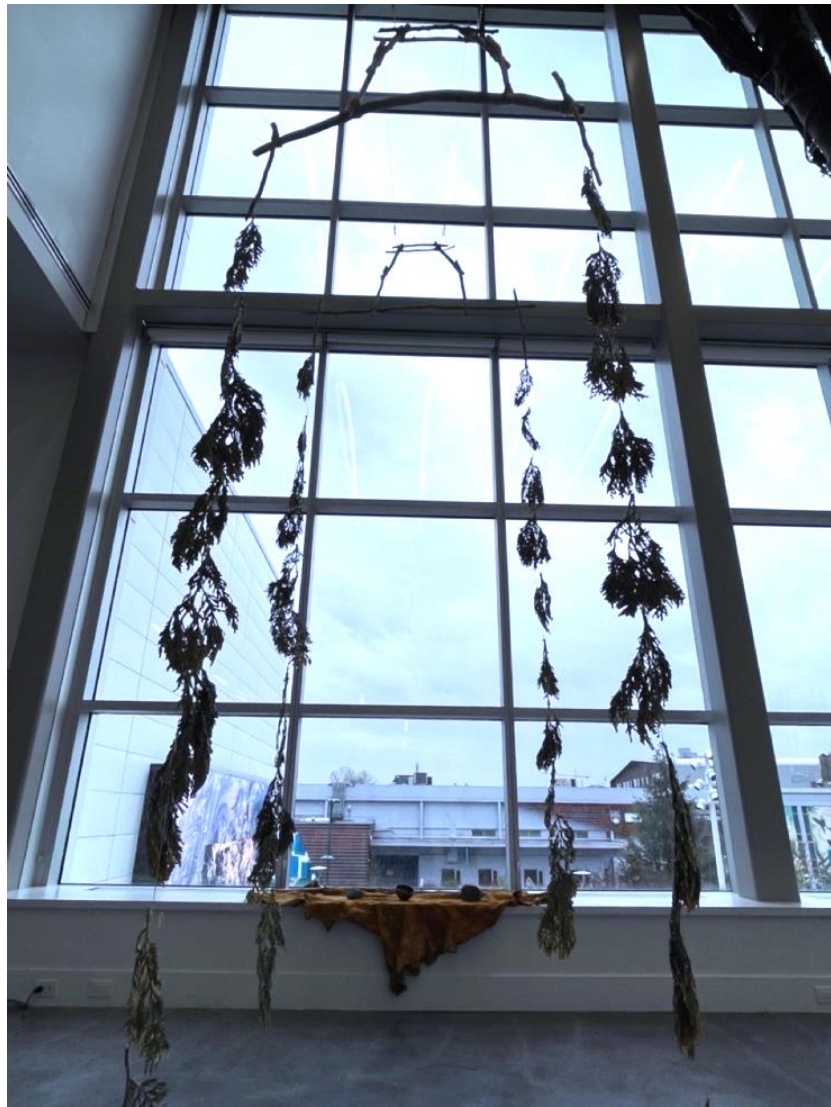


fig. 3 Entity sculptures viewed from inside the structure.

skin is natural dark grey hand felted sheep's wool. The structure engages paracord and sinew in methods of hand-lashing the solid components creating a self-supporting tension.

The entity sculptures are constructed of felled branches, lashed sinew, and ritually gathered cedar boughs encased in beeswax, draped from either shoulder fastened with cotton & linen cording. They guard and guide signals to the Eastern facing doorway of the structure from the Eastern Doorway¹⁰ of the spirit world.



fig. 4 Zoë Laycock. Sonic Portals. QRV. 2024. Install documentation.

¹⁰ The Eastern Doorway is the transition from the spirit world into the physical world, it is synonymous with awakening, birth, and springtime. Waabinong in Anishinaabemowin. The thesis project will be installed on the spring equinox 2024, honouring yet another layer of this cosmic connection and ancient practice.

Each element of this artwork is deeply considered in both technical logic of the material, and in the relational or spiritual connection. The plywood ribs are stained with iron water that



fig. 5 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals*. QRV. 2024. Construction in progress.

was gifted to me from a dear friend. Iron is an ancient method of spiritual protection in many cultures, infusing it into the frame of the structure aids in the spiritual integrity of the portal. The heavy foundational steel brackets were a gift

from another dear person, one who's support without I would not have been able to have as many successes I am privileged to hold.

Unbleached 100% cotton, or muslin of the outer skin, is a physically lighter version of the material used for tipis, it also references the heavy canvas layers that are used to construct a sweat lodge for ceremony.



fig. 6 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals*. QRV. 2024. Frame construction detail.

Wool of the inner skin was chosen due to the porous fibre's impeccable acoustic dampening ability.



fig. 7 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: QRV*. 2024. Interior detail, felted wool.

Shortly after making the decision to use wool, I discovered that my generationally estranged great-grandfather worked as a wool comber in England for years after presumed dead by his son and wife, my Granddad, and his mother. This discovery speaks as more than coincidence and is an example of what I consider as *Frequency Haunting*. As an intuitive affinity to use wool, this frequency haunting granted me access to an ancestor and his embodied experience working with that material. Our hands shared working the same textures and motions, only separated by nearly a century of linear time.¹¹

¹¹ The 1939 England and Wales Register documents my Great Grandfather, John W. Laycock, occupation as “wool comber.”

Cedar boughs are another layer of protection against negative energy transmissions. I encase them in beeswax, outside of tradition, but to honour a great-grandfather from another lineage, who kept bees in Saskatchewan. They are entwined with cotton and linen cord, another gift from a friend.



fig. 8 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: QRV*. 2024. Cedar boughs dipped in beeswax, process detail.



fig. 9 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: QRV*. 2024. Paracord tension, frame construction process detail.

Paracord links to lineages of military service; two of my grandparents' rest in the Field of Honour in Canmore, AB. Days as a child spent in the shadows of the Rocky Mountains with my dad often concluded at the Exshaw Royal Canadian Legion, Heart Mountain Branch #179.¹² Sounds that existed immemorial there, of the wind gusting through the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, to the gentle yet thundering rolls of waterfalls and river rapids echo in my memories.

¹² I once won the meat draw here in August 2016 just before a town reunion party. However, I was not present to pick up the prized butchery provisions on the day of the draw. It was still nice to see my name written in chalk, on the hanging board over the bar.



fig. 10 Zoë Laycock. Twilight, August 15, 2022. Three Sisters Mountains¹³, Canmore AB. Digital photo from out the back window of Dad's truck, Highway #1.

The sounds that exist in my lifetime, whirring and whistling of air passing outside of a fast-moving vehicle driving down the highway, is a non-silence that still lulls me as a passenger, head resting on a cold window.

¹³ From this moment recorded:

To miss a mountain

It's funny to miss a mountain, to miss a mountain you've barely seen for over a year.

To miss a mountain that I had such a deep relationship with, a familiarity.

They are as much my sisters as they are each other's.

To be overcome with emotion, with grief and joy like you would be in a bittersweet reunion.

To miss a mountain.

To miss the air around it, to know their silhouette amongst the darkening sky, to know where the stars align with peaks - ancient beyond my time, but for all of my time.

To grow in their shadow and learn while they wait, while they wait for me to leave and return.

I'm surprised to love a mountain, to feel it, to be overwhelmed

A strange thing to love a mountain

to really know and love a mountain

Is it simply sublime nature's beauty that wells salty prisms down my cheeks?

It's more, it's more that my face knows their face.

Their faces know mine.

My heart in sync with it, time universally forever

It's weird to miss a mountain, more than you miss home.

Sound holds immense power in transporting an Experiencer beyond the visual and physical perception of place. Lisa Cooke Ravensbergen is a multi-disciplinary artist and writer of Ojibwe/Swampy Cree and English/Irish descent. Ravensbergen's, immersive sound installation, *The Seventh Fire* (2023) successfully parallels the strategy of using ceremony as inspiration while distorting from actual ceremony, as an intentional broadened access point for Experiencers. *The Seventh Fire* (2023) is a 4DSound immersive work produced specifically for Lobe Studios.¹⁴ The place was ephemeral, and Ravensbergen exercised her ability to engage the Experiencer through sound and with the invitation to be comfortable – to involve the body by sitting, laying down, offering blankets, cushions, cedar tea, and nourishment.

The Seventh Fire commanded the space, and more importantly– the time, with an 85-minute running time for the immersive audio composition. Drawing from this presentation of media the thesis project, *Sonic Portals: QRV* also introduces the term/concept Voluntarily Suspension of Autonomy. Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy is enacted through the surrender of one's body to time, to give full attention to stories and to be immersed somewhere beyond the physical. *The Seventh Fire*, sonically leads through traditional Anishinaabe storylines, sitting with aunties and Koko's around the kitchen table laughing, to be transported through storms and carried by thunderbird spirits, and welcomed back to hear the warm crackling of a sacred fire.

The Seventh Fire framed an experience as a ritual. Entering the studio visitors were asked to remove their shoes and to have a cup of cedar tea. Engagement was guided, it was not an artwork to be wandered upon, but a clear commitment of time and space. This clear introduction to the work developed a framework for understanding that the Experiencer could prepare for when entering the space. It reiterates care for protocol and for ritual not only in the audio but as a

¹⁴ A dedicated spatial sound studio in so-called Vancouver, British Columbia equipped with fully surrounding speakers, in the ceiling, floor, and walls, completed with vibroacoustic floor tiles.

continuity for Indigenous ways of knowing and moving through time, space, story, and land base.

This iteration, *Sonic Portals: QRV* has a deliberate shift in focus, from video projection and the visual experience to an audio based embodied experience. To focus more intently on sound as an atypical transmission of knowledge allows for tuning in to the transportive nature that sound can evoke. Through an immersive sonic composition, the Experiencers reference to specific place is blurred and distorted. The omission of visual media sets intention for the possibility of a simultaneously embodied, and out of body experience. Without distraction of visual projections, the Experiencer is invited to be attentive to subtleties in the audio.

The sound composition honours the Beyond in being the perceived unseen.

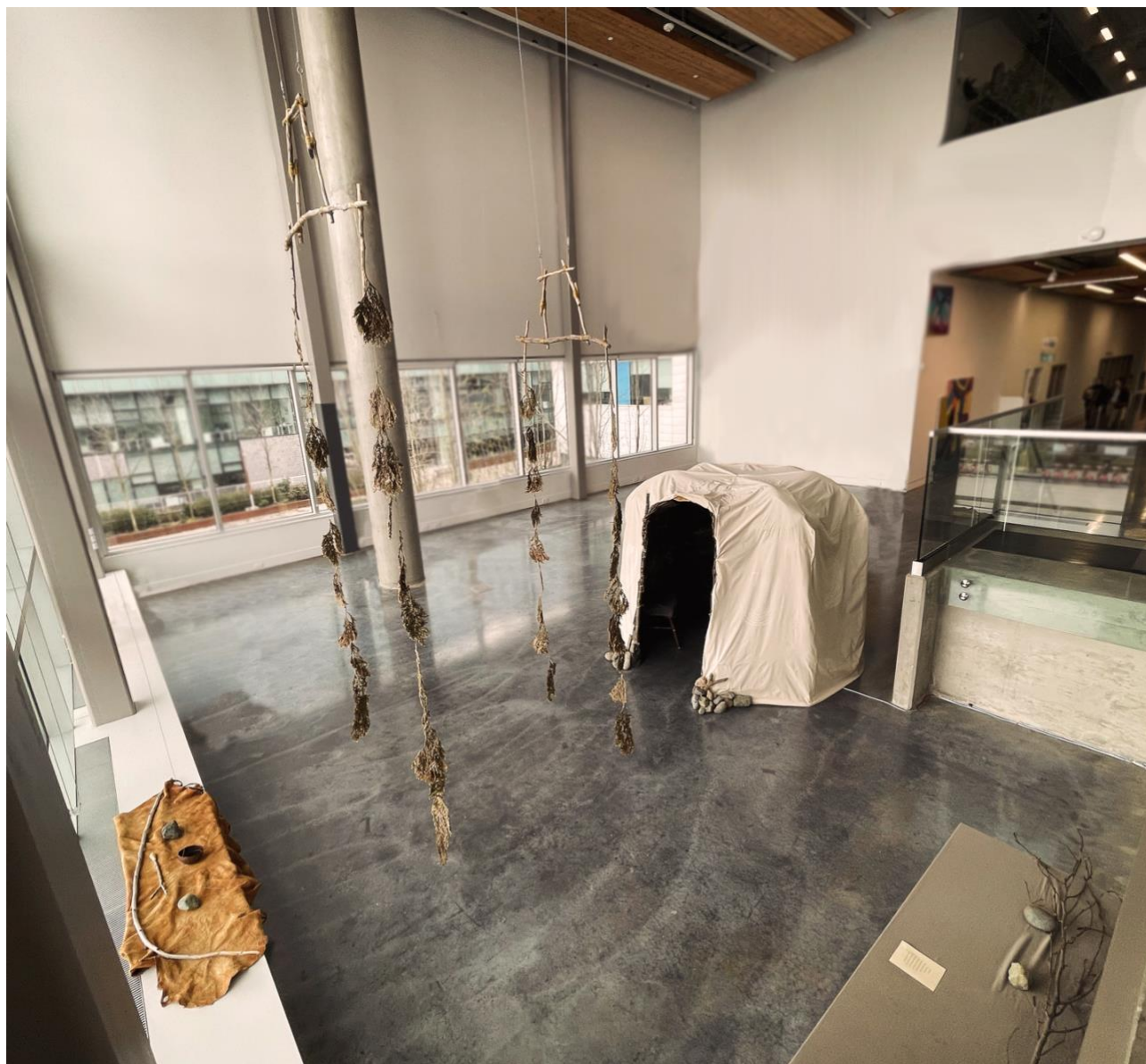


fig. 11 Zoë Laycock. Sonic Portals: QRV. 2024. Thesis exhibition installation view.

Incoming/Outgoing Transmissions: Artistic Method

Cosmic Feedback is the process of acknowledging the Beyond through interconnection between myself, my ancestors, the land, and the spirit worlds, while using media as a point of access to receive, consider, and make visible and audible. The process oscillates between the seen and the unseen.

I maintain and nourish the spiritual ecology of each place by always beginning with ceremony while on the land or physically travelling to haunted, energy and spiritual epicentres to gather the media. It is important to introduce myself to seen and unseen beings, by speaking out loud to each place. Spoken introduction is followed by an offering and acknowledgement, and asking permission to gather media, audio, or video, as I would with any other traditional medicine or material gathering from the land.



fig. 12 Zoë Laycock field audio recording on the banks of the Rio Grande outside of Taos, NM. August 2023. Photo taken by artists' partner and unofficial assistant Jesse Goodman.

Gathering the visual and audio media is entwined with protocol and ceremony, often unseen in the finished outcome of the work, the rituals are a necessary action informed by my own cultural and spiritual upbringing. My mother passed down to me the teachings and practice of offering, asking permission, taking only what is needed, and giving thanks. It can be referenced in contemporary academic circles as The

Honourable Harvest.¹⁵

Through ceremony I open myself as a conduit to the alternative modes of communication necessary to ensure spiritual safety for feedback to come. The materials I use are often chosen intuitively,¹⁶ but their spiritual implications are also considered.



fig. 13 Field research photo from audio gathering site. Banks of the Rio Grande outside of Taos, NM. Photo by Zoë Laycock. August 2023. Note: This hidden memorial site was revealed to me after acknowledgement, offering and giving thanks.

My artwork is created by bridging contemporary and traditional technologies. Physical materials alongside media reference the interdimensional,¹⁷ by considering the visual, auditory, smell and tactile elements of each material. Simultaneities of the contemporary and traditional technologies I use, emerge in materials in many ways: Using digital sound production to loop the beat of a traditional handmade drum, or a CNC (Computer Numerical Controlled) Machine

¹⁵ I firmly believe that The Honourable Harvest is cultural knowledge and cannot be accredited to a single theorist, however the term has been recently more broadly understood through Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

¹⁶ I reject the notion that intuition is only of the individual as a methodology. Individual Intuition is a selfish rejection of the knowledge and guidance of the ancestors and entities that influence the work. My intuition is guided through ancient ancestral connections. It reflects the notion of haunted frequencies that live within lineages.

¹⁷ Oxford English Dictionary defines as: Existing in or moving between different dimensions of space or time. Also: designating something that enables movement between different dimensions of space or time. Originally and chiefly *Science Fiction*. I include the engagement of multiple sensory experiences, sound, smell, temperature, and feeling while describing immersive installation artworks.

Router to cut wooden frame components that are lashed together by hand, using tension to create a temporary but stable structure akin to sweat lodge or tipi building.

Simultaneous cycles of practice-led, interdisciplinary research, and research through performance iteration builds on reflexivity that synthesizes subsequent manifestations. Each installation is dependent on the feedback from the last. Attending to feedback frequencies inform shifts and experiments going forward, while honouring the time and knowledge of my ancestor's passed.

Interdimensional Broadcasting is a methodological product of Cosmic Feedback. Cosmic Feedback honours my personal cyclical reciprocity with the Beyond, while Interdimensional Broadcasting is the outgoing transmission that invites human Experiencers into my relationship with the Beyond. Here, I use the term *Broadcasting* to refer to the transmission of information or media by radio and television. The implication of broadcasting information is shared outwards to an audience of many, an audience exists to broadcast to (Peters, J.). Interdimensional Broadcasting acknowledges an audience beyond the boundaries of typical human-centred viewership, with transmissions intended for alternate astral dimensions. As with most conversation within the physical world, to continue to receive meaningful transmissions from the Beyond, it is integral to extend transmissions as reciprocal communication.

Interdimensional Broadcasting is akin to using sonar technologies to delineate decolonial practice and use an Indigenous lens to meaningfully possess space within the colonial institution. My indigeneity is inherently relational, and so receiving transmission feedback from the Experiencer is integral to shaping the way my practice is represented as a part of my community and culture.

Multi-sensory observation and deep listening¹⁸ (Brearley) inform theoretical and aesthetic decisions -- slowness, careful consideration, and reflection are favoured over creating more and more new experiences. In addition to spanning materialistic human-perceived reality and the Beyond, Interdimensional Broadcasting invites the human Experiencers bodily senses to engage with the outgoing broadcast transmissions, including but not limited to sight, sound, scent, temperature, and extra sensory perception or ESP. Interdimensional Broadcasting is looping back into multi-cyclical Cosmic Feedback.

Frequency Haunting is the framing of intuitive decision making based on the understanding or belief in guidance from the Beyond. It describes how certain actions, aspects or material choices arise again and again throughout lineages and familial histories, as well as histories of place. I describe specific impulses as varying frequencies, and my work includes attending to or intuitively tuning in to these frequencies. Frequency Haunting gives energy to the residues of actions and choices of those who have come and passed, and those who have not yet come to pass.

Each conceptual framework, *Cosmic Feedback*, *Interdimensional Broadcasting* and *Frequency Haunting* motivate the technical decisions in my work. The layering of audio and video, temporal distortions, and loops motivated by these ideas, bringing them into visual and aural spaces. Implementing digital effects to sounds from nature, allows for comparison between the tangible and intangible, that distortion builds space between what is initially recorded as input, and the warped output. Ghosts of the original sounds linger throughout compositions and ground the media to the timespace where it was collected.

¹⁸ Described by Australian Aboriginal communities *Dadirri* deep listening is a practice of immense understanding, almost meditative act of listening beyond words to gain more holistic understandings of what is being communicated. I use deep listening as an act of not only listening to Experiencer and peer feedback, but deep listening to the installation space, to the entities, energies and vibrational frequencies that arise from the work.

My affinity to the Beyond and the spiritual is a frequency haunting, my affinity to radio and atypical modes of communication is linked to past familial practices. Often, the impulse comes first, and only through looking back is the haunting nature of the impulse revealed. There is an implied responsibility to uphold and maintain the frequency haunting, it connects the past to the future. Community connection is integral to thriving cultural connection, when cultural knowledges are transmitted collectively, they remain present, and alive. Remaining open to receive the transmissions can hold and heal, it can carry important knowledge across generations.

Applied Frequency Haunting: Key Concepts

Oscillating Simultaneous Time: Indaanikoobijigan. Those you may see with me.

Sonic Portals exhibits my understanding of remaining open to the simultaneous and multiple realities of time through multiple layers of media. James Vukelich is an Anishinaabe/Ojibwe language revivalist and cultural teacher. Vukelich describes in his 2023 book, *The Seven Generations and the Seven Grandfather Teachings* deep rooted understandings of relationality is built into the Anishinaabe culture and worldview through Anishinaabe language. As well as having published a book, he shared many language teachings through live-streaming and recorded video, active online since 2012, and gaining more popularity since 2018.

Before my Nimishoomis (grandfather) Lawrence “Teddy Boy” Houle passed away in June 2020, my mother and I asked about the continuity in dialect and teachings Vukelich shares with those of our own family and community. My Grandpa Teddy Boy vehemently confirmed the teachings are congruent with our own,¹⁹ reinforcing that the language teachings from Vukelich are rooted in “the old language”.

Anishinaabe language before shortenings and contemporary slang, “the old language”, holds strong connection to knowledges before contact and pre-colonization. Approval of the source of cultural knowledge from my Nimishoomis holds immense value by means of my own

¹⁹ I am Anishinaabe, Ojibway, Saulteaux. Informed by where my family is from, and recollections of familial conversations. I use these terms interchangeably when referencing my own identity. Saulteaux is a term imposed on us, it means *people that hop*. Ojibway means *to pucker*, in reference to the top of an Ojibway style of moccasin. It is an overarching term, but it is used in colonial systems as names and descriptions of my family community ties and political nations. Anishinaabe is the identifier my Grandpa Teddy Boy used later in life, as it is rooted in what we called ourselves, before contact, in our own language.

cultural & spiritual integrity. Upstanding pointed nuances of identity and Anishinaabe culture actively rejects assumptions of pan-Indigeneity.

Vukelich discusses how Anishinaabe Ojibwe root words are used and shifted between phrases that emulate a holistic worldview and Indigenous understanding that we, being human, flora, fauna, natural environments, and beyond human, are all relations, we are all immensely interconnected. Language reveals specifically how The Seven Generations as a philosophy is connected to an overarching Seven Grandfather Teachings, a set of sacred laws, outlining core values of Indigenous culture, community, and spirituality.

The Seven Generations, in Anishinaabe Ojibway refers to: Self, Mother and Father, Grandmother and Grandfather, and Great Grandparents. Indaanikoobijigan, the word referring²⁰ to great grandparents is the same as the word that expresses my Ancestor; even more compelling, it is the same word as my great grandchild. Cognizance of cyclical interconnected time, and importantly interconnected care, is built within the language itself, upheld in ancient words that are thousands of years old.

Vukelich articulates these teachings which express cellular interconnection to our ancestors across time and through lineages. I carry this teaching into my practice while contending with time-based, immersive media. The layers and simultaneity of time allow for the potential of knowledge to be transferred between ancestors and relatives (human and beyond human). There is emphasis on the spoken word as the vibrational frequency that occurs when the words are said aloud is an activation of the transmission of energy that surpasses linear time.

Outside of the confines of a physical body, by honouring tuning into that frequency aloud, a remembering occurs through material practice, and engagement with place. Activating a

²⁰ I use “referring” or “in reference to” because there is no way to fully, accurately translate the entirety and immense understanding that is described through the Anishinaabe language into an English word.

specific time and place sonically allows for remembering through embodied memory and through non-physical, atypical modes of communication.

My care for the protocol in conducting myself with the spirit realm is deeply informed by the Seven Grandfather Teachings: Truth, Humility, Respect, Love, Bravery or Courage, Honesty, and Wisdom/Intelligence. The teachings are ingrained alongside my lifelong practice of ceremony while possessing spaces within the institution, introducing, and acknowledging spirit within a vehicle that has past caused immense harm.

My desire to bind old worlds and new worlds is described through this deep embodied memory of my culture and worldview, it is a part of my ancestral knowledge.

It is deep within my blood memory.

Blood Memory

Nancy Mithlo, a Chiricahua Apache curator, writer, and professor, discusses embodied intergenerational knowledge as blood memory, in the 2011 article, *Blood Memory and the Arts: Indigenous Genealogies and Imagined Truths*. Mithlo considers the intricacies of portraying collective and individual experiences of Indigenous artists working with lens-based media by examining works of Chippewa filmmaker Marcella Ernest, and Ho-Chunk photographer, Tom Jones. Deepening the understanding of the term “Blood Memory” as both an embodied and beyond embodied memory that links Indigenous people to the land, histories, and traumas outside of a Western-Individualistic worldview. Mithlo applies concepts of embodied knowledge from documentary filmmaker and theorist, David MacDougall, exploring how Indigenous lens-

based art enacts an embodied memory while balancing an understanding and inclusion of native and non-native audiences through manipulation of the gaze, spectatorship, and possession (MacDougall).

By considering the ways blood memory, as an Indigenous tool and encompassing trope, can act as an unseen yet invaluable asset to Indigenous artwork, Mithlo describes how it references beyond biological heritage into community memory, knowledges, and wisdom. Blood memory brings Indigenous art beyond typical understandings of identity art.

The term, Blood Memory, honours a network of knowledges that may not be understood by every viewer, but live within work for those privileged to specific cultural understanding. When this text was published in 2011, Mithlo expressed concern for a lack of Indigenous representation within institutional spaces. In 2024 there has been a significant shift towards decolonization²¹ or at least, more mindful inclusion of Indigenous artists within institutional contemporary arts spaces. However, the rampant mis-self-identification²² of Indigenous people, within academia and institutional spaces, has created tension, mistrust, and lateral violence. There is a current, real-time appropriation of blood memory, of communal, ancestral, and familial knowledges, intergenerational triumphs and traumas that create complicated nuances to identity, and inclusion of spirit within artworks and spaces.

Mithlo emphasizes that audiences do not need to be able to decode Indigenous artwork but there is a balance between intellectual access and what remains inaccessible. Although

²¹ Indigenization is another buzzword that institutions introduce as a framework towards diversity and inclusion. As if there is a way to even “Indigenize” a longstanding harmful, colonial supremacist system of education with centuries of foundation in the active erasure of Indigenous peoples all over Mother Earth. Ever sick.

²² Contemporarily known as “Pretendian/ism”. I do not have the capacity to expand on this phenomenon within this document, however it is multifaceted, and I encourage the reader to research further into how this actively dilutes Indigenous culture and aids in the erasure and continued genocide of Indigenous people.

artworks may not look recognizably, or stereotypically Indigenous it does not retract from enacting Indigenous lived corporeal knowledges.

Mithlo focusses on the inclusion of visible Indigenous bodies, familial relation, and blood memory through the depiction of persons. The thesis projects place-based media gathering is entwined, I consider the places I gather media from as my relations. Maintaining the relationship to land-based media holds as much spirit and embodied knowledge as any human relative. I explore the balance of spectatorship and the corporeal through *Sonic Portals* installations, between the viewer and the viewed.

Balanced spectatorship undulating between granting access and refusal engages points of connection to a variety of Experiencers, with information and codes as easter eggs within the work for those who understand niche stories and knowledges.

Liminal Place-Based: Here I am. Here They are. We are always in-between.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist, considers a shift to land-based pedagogy in her 2014 article, *Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation*. She emphasizes the importance and remembering that occurs when engaging in land-based learning, that place and the living organisms of place offer knowledge to be learned or re-learned. The extension of connection to place is described by scholars Evelyn Peters and Carol Lafond in their 2013 article *I Basically Mostly Stick with My Own Kind* through,

Reimagining and interacting with cities as sites of cultural connection and spiritual practice, where we seek out and honour those pockets of visible “land” and also remember and revitalize what lies under the asphalt, can bring healing and (re)connection. (Peters & Lafond).

Building on the concepts of land-based and place-based learning, I challenge the boundaries of the living and physical world and argue that liminal place-based stretches into the Beyond, the unseen and the non-physical spiritual ecology of place.

Place-based, or Land-Based honour the site specificity of knowledge transmission, sharing and collaborative communication.

Liminal, or Liminality is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “characterized by being on a boundary or threshold, esp. by being transitional or intermediate between two states, situations, etc.” I am using this term to describe the nature of the Beyond as site specifically relational in between the physical and metaphysical world. Liminal considers the implications of connection to the Beyond that lies outside of the physical perceived reality, Liminal Place Based is a larger aperture for these connections on multiple frequencies of the seen and unseen spectrums. It is a term that is inclusive of the physical place and the relationships that exist with the otherworldly with site specificity. This term describes how entities aren’t necessarily all around everywhere all the time, and how some places are haunted or energetically charged while some aren’t.



fig. 14 Zoë Laycock. 2023. Field media gathering near Skwlax te Secwepemculecw (North Shuswap BC.) after a devastating wildfire season.²³

²³ Burnt forest with blackened ghosts of trees not yet felled the haunting scent of embers linger.

There is an immensely diverse and site-specific spiritual ecology, or interdimensional ecology to place. Peters & Lafond speak to understanding the “land beneath the asphalt” however, sometimes is the walls, the floorboards, the doorways that hold onto the energy, to the frequency transmissions. Sometimes it is my deceased Koko’s kitchen table that holds the connection. Sometimes it is the tarot cards gifted to me from my father, when he found them in his father’s apartment after he passed. It is tapping into the frequencies of connection, being open to the transmissions wherever they may arise.

Liminal Place-Based is also to be conscious, mindful, and specific to here, where I am, where you are, in this moment. To me each place, regardless of where or how it is used, holds something – each place has a relationality to something, even if we do not fully understand.

Broadcast #2 - Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check. (2023).

Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check. (2023) is a liminal place-based immersive installation, employing two short throw projectors, video, and audio components, and larger than human scale entity sculptures constructed using a mix of natural and salvaged materials: cedar boughs, felled sticks, sinew, cotton, and reclaimed industrial textile waste.



fig. 15 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check.* 2023 (Installation detail).

Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check. uses physical materials and non-physical media to create an immersive and space commanding installation. Room filling, parallel projections of looping land-based video allow for the active and passive manipulation of light, darkness, casting shadows, and reflection by the media, materials, and Experiencer. The video projections

portray movement, providing visual access points to place beyond the four walls of the room, an ethereal representation that is aligned with experiential temporality. Images of rolling land bases across Turtle Island, haunted and energetically charged places, engulf the Experiencer, the walls, the entity sculptures, and ceiling, allowing for shadow and distorted perceptions based on the movement and interaction within the installation space.

This installation is a conduit between the physical land, the spirits of the land, and the projection as the apparition of the place to the Experiencer. The video is a document of my introduction, acknowledgment, and recognition of and to the spirits of each place and between the spirit worlds.



fig. 16 Zoë Laycock. Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check. 2023 (Installation Documentation).

The video projected is in 4:3 aspect ratio that draws from the history of film making and traditional tele-broadcasting. 4:3 directly references the connection between physical film cells, and the physical processes of exposure to light and development, a transformation that binds an ephemeral present moment to a physical object in time. Through the refusal of colour, using

black and white
creates a timeless
space, there is a
history of dreams,
and liminal spaces
portrayed in black
and white in
popular media,
spiritualism, and
occult aesthetic
traditions.



fig. 17 Actor Max Schreck as Nosferatu. 1922. Film still.

Drawing influence from German expressionist cinema, specifically *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horrors* (1922), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), my use of black and white references stories of the Beyond, the Other, the liminal and unknown (Malakaj).

Black and white transports the Experiencer without distraction of specificity. The representation of colour on film is always distorted, it is an imitation and inaccurate from the true immensity of colour and saturation found while being on the territory. Black and white gives space from the physical land, it implies the ghost of the land, surrounding and projected upon the Experiencer's body as an apparition of place.

The parallel projections surround the Experiencer in between moments of stillness, reflection, subtle rhythm, and moments of vast sublime movement through a human obstructed natural world. The body that blocks the light from the projection, is further engulfed by it, to have it pass through, to imagine the layers of connection of the Experiencer to the spectral places passing on the walls of the installation space. Circled on all sides of the room with moving images of land bases, upon entering the room the individual is *in it* — there is no sever between Experiencer, entity, land, spirits, all are completely connected as all our relations ²⁴ for the brief time committed to the installation as an act of Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy.

I consider how speculative environments bring forward how to manipulate a space, to bring the vast spirit of place into a setting for an ephemeral experience in a meaningful way. In a December 2023 email exchange with artist, David Hoffos they write,

After I made them, I knew they were no longer mine- there was a lonely dreamer out there that I was reaching out for, the perfect audience, an audience of one, one at a time, searching in the dark. That's all I ever really wished for in my labours- that the story of my work be somehow carried and remembered, whether it continued to physically exist or not.

In reference to Hoffos 2011 iteration of *Scenes from the House Dream*, at the Illingworth Kerr Gallery Calgary, AB. Hoffos' six-year running series *Scenes from the House Dream* (2011) was an immersive installation compiled of a variety of dioramas that employed miniature scaled environments, reflections, and multi-channel video projection depicting domestic, internal, and

²⁴ All Our Relations as a phrase encompassing the Indigenous core worldview of interconnectedness. All My Relations is often spoken at the end of prayer, within ceremony and ritual as an acknowledgement to each integral relationship one has to the universe. *Mitakuye Oyasmin* in Saulteaux was taught to me, at a very young age, by my mother to speak aloud to conclude ceremony or prayer.

external spaces. *Scenes from the House Dream* functioned as illusion-based site-specific installations. Using video, mirrors, windows, mindful manipulation of light and darkness, and plays on perspective, Hoffos commanded space.

Hoffos' installation featured videos showing interior domestic spaces, views from inside ensuite bathrooms to a bedroom, and exterior spaces. Viewing a front yard from the end of the driveway through manicured trees and lawns, or the view of a school bus just past the tree line of a forest. There were instances of seeing active spectral miniatures of yourself, and other moving human figures through small viewing windows within the installation— all while having to navigate alone through a darkened space of the revealed and the unseen.

Scenes from the House Dream (2011) informed the thesis project by bridging gaps between temporal media, physical environment site-specificity, and the distortion of time and space from the current reality. Hoffos' installations engaged with a voyeuristic experience of other worlds from the viewer while building capacity for belief and connection to a place beyond. *Scenes from the House Dream* shifted the audience's role from viewer, to Experienter, creating alternative access points to the work through a series of small windows to view through. The darkened space guided by the low lights of the windows and video projection to move the body of the Experienter through the space.

Hoffos' framing of their installations through the title and didactics allowed for a playful suspension of logic at the doorway. Building capacity for belief, and to engage with the unreal other world being presented in the dioramas, through video, light, reflection, and illusion. By manipulated the perception of a space, the Experienter can transport themselves into another place or time through an immersive experience. I draw from Hoffos' installation intent for ephemeral interaction with the Experienter in a transformed and possessed space.

In *Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check* (2023), the visible environment, and playing with illusion, shadow and light requires the additional engagement of sound as a tool to fill and take space. The audio is another layer to the reclamation of place.



fig. 18 Zoë Laycock. Elk Hand Drum made by artist and used in audio composition (2023).

The audio composed for *Sonic Portals: ARQ. Radio Check* is a loop that begins and ends with the beating of a traditional elk hide hand drum I constructed. The hand drum is present throughout the entire 20 minute 25 second composition, it was recorded as a single track. As my own enacting of Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy and a ritual offering of time to the sound of the beating drum.

Field audio recordings from locations depicted in the video projections include the sound of running water from the Rio Grande and Mississippi River, from the energetically heavy banks of Algiers Point, Louisiana, the arrival and departure of massive Amtrak trains, and audio gathered from Spirit Box²⁵ communication sessions.

Through gathering these audio frequencies from highly energetically charged locations, the audio attempts to evoke a feeling of *frequency haunting* to the Experiencer. The audio

²⁵ Spirit Box is the commercial name of a device commonly used in paranormal investigations, it is a small handheld radio with a modification to rapidly scan or sweep multiple stations at once. When in use it emits radio static or white noise that entity voices can then be heard through.

frequencies gathered allows me to create a broadcast to the spirits of each place. The intention is that the media gathered holds the energetic residue of each place and allows the entities²⁶ to visit or experience the installation alongside human Experiencers.

²⁶ Entities used here to reference the energetic residues of past people, beyond human, elemental and environmental beings.

Conclusion

CQ DX: Calling out to the Distant.

My unwavering belief in the Beyond was granted through both ancestral maternal and paternal lineages. The acknowledging of the human after death, and beyond human carefully tends to the energy fields that are encountered as humans understand the earth, and in surrounding planes. My work challenges academia and colonial institutional knowledge supremacy through engaging with alternative knowledge transmissions and cosmic communication strategies.

My lineage is comprised of medicine people, ceremonialists, psychics, sound workers, clairvoyants, mediums, and broadcasters. My material practice holds present techniques and fibres of my ancestral cloth, a comfort that overpowers the multitude of entity encounters I have experienced throughout my life.

I am an Experienter.

Through the sound carries energy across millennia and dimension, communicating with the spirits of place, to dreams categorized into no longer just dreams. Encounters are a possession, a suspension of autonomy, a glimpse to the future, a defense against spiritual warfare. *Interdimensional Broadcasting* is a practice beyond ghost stories, and cheap thrills, it is engrained deep within everything I do, whether I choose it or not. To deny or rationalize myself into a false sense of normalcy, I'm dragged back into the ethereal. Summoned from all dimensions with no chance of ignorance as an option.

So many things I remember now from a time my blood and bones remember, a time before. A time before I do. Through *Sonic Portals* connection is overwhelming and my thoughts

are consumed by how I know my hands are doing the same motions, holding the same materials, making the same waves as so many hands before me. How my hands know, and how unwilling to surrender this precious epiphany to an institution that has no spirit, a system that will consume, that will ravish and destroy, over contextualize, analyze, and hunger for more while retaining nothing. Unwilling to gift precious morsels of the ethereal to a beast that will never truly understand and does not really want to understand. I want is to keep my ancestral secrets safe, to keep our knowledge, our frequencies, and transmissions safe within my own worn, tired, working hands.

I'm reconciling these multifaceted aspects of my own identity through these mainstream culturally accessible visual languages. With deep understanding and participation in Indigenous ceremony, I am using references to ceremony as a way of protecting sacred knowledge that has been appropriated and harmed while using western European ceremony to describe my understanding. My blood is infused with magic, divination, with connection to the Beyond, I am a distilled conduit. Everyone and everything that has led to my existence now is what I seek comfort in, it is the non-physical place I feel most at home.

In dialogue eternally.

Mitakuye Oyasin.

Post-Production. (A reflection)

The installation *Sonic Portals: QRV* engages with time in several ways simultaneously. I consider Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy through the relationship of ephemerality and the temporal. Individuals present in my defence presentation took part in Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy, by simply attending and gifting their time to listen, in hopes of gaining additional understanding. I describe it as the act of committing to experience the totality of temporal media, it parallels mediumship, trances, and possession to access information or connection. Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy can be seen in contemporary media consumption, but it can also vary. It can refer to the way I was taught to sit and listen to an elder speak for as long as it may take. Sometimes, very slow as we are listening and understanding over lifetimes. Compared to looking to The Golden Age of Radio or pre-24-hour television news cycle, it was time that once dictated how humans received information. There was a time passed, when our knowledge, information and news was only available to us at a particular time for a particular time. In this way Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy can be compared to the colloquial “tuning in”.

Voluntarily Suspended Autonomy can be enacted both through care and through desire. It be enacted to seek connection and represents the most precious human currency to give. Time. It takes time to build relationships, to build understanding and to build connection. Through time, we can allow the necessary transfer of energy to gain those connections, internally, within our own bodies, or brain synapsis, or externally, with other beings, places, and entities.

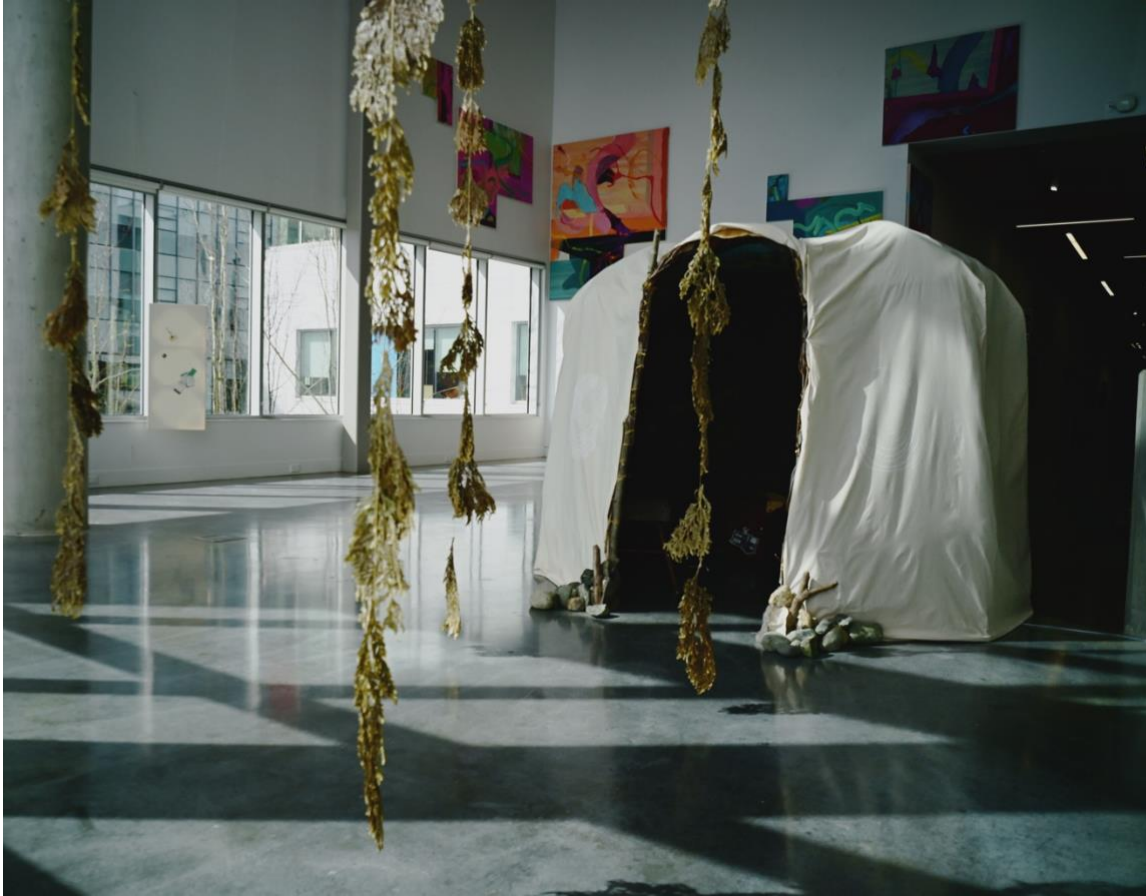


fig. 19 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: QRV*. 2024.

A fundamental intention of creating place for interconnection feels successfully fulfilled with the installation of *Sonic Portals: QRV* alongside the thesis defence presentation that occurred April 9, 2024. I was immensely impacted by the words of a friend and Indigenous writer, who uses a motorized mobility aid. She was pleased to learn the structure was constructed with physical accessibility in mind as well, a doorway large enough for her to maneuver into, and enough space to turn around and exit.



fig. 20 Zoë Laycock. *Sonic Portals: QRV*. 2024. Interior Detail.

She was able to enter the temporary structure and made the immediate connection to a spiritual place that she had, up until that moment, not ever been able to enter for safety and mobility limitations. She expressed gratitude to be able to experience the inside of a

structure previously inaccessible for one reason or another. Later, she shared a piece of writing that was produced within the installation, stating the reflection would never have come to be without the place *Sonic Portals: QRV* created for that time.

For *Sonic Portals: QRV* to hold knowledge that is not archived through written word is an immense privilege. The opportunity to use my own voice to channel knowledge I hold close to my heart, with those people who were willing to suspend their time and to listen, is an equal privilege, on which I will continue to reflect and grow into.

Taking, giving, and possessing humanly time to deeply, and fully embody listening is to pay close attention to continue to learn from the past and present, and future -- from simultaneous imprints of energies in time. In hopes of bringing positive transmissions to perceivable reality, gives time to perpetuate what it means to “be a good ancestor” as an already future ancestor. The sound composition and listening place I’ve created embodies layered

temporal structures. Both physical and non-physical. The aim of my thesis project is to extend an invitation for belonging, to acknowledge the interdimensional and hold place for connection. My aim is that the Experiencer may not feel so alone, and that there is the possibility of something, Beyond.



fig. 21 Zoë Laycock. Sonic Portals: QRV. Offering alter installation detail.

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