

An aerial photograph of a rocky beach. The beach is composed of dark, wet sand and numerous grey and brown rocks of various sizes. In the center of the frame, there is a piece of white driftwood with a long, thin branch extending to the left. Below the driftwood, a bright red flower with a yellow center is stuck into the sand. A long, dark shadow is cast across the sand from the driftwood and flower towards the right side of the image.

Carrying Others

*A Feminist Materialist Approach
to Research-Creation*

prOphecy sun

Carrying Others:

A Feminist Materialist Approach to Research-Creation

by
prOphecy sun

MFA, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, 2015

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
School of Interactive Arts + Technology
Faculty of Communication Art and Technology

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Cover: Figure 1.

*prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet, Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains,
Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard, 2019. Video still from projection #5.*

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The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

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ABSTRACT

Everyone is connected and operates with or alongside a maternal structure. As psychologist Bracha L. Ettinger states, we all hold within us an imprint or memory of being carried—carried across landscapes, across time, into destinations unknown (Ettinger, 2006). This doctoral dissertation takes up these poetics through an interdisciplinary investigation of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation practices and strategies. Referencing recent traditions of Art Intervention, Performance Art, Land Art, and the canon of feminist art history, this research mirrors, connects with, and critiques digital imaginaries and considers how the maternal body responds to the agency of things in the world.

This research makes a unique contribution to the humanities, feminist scholarship and Research-Creation practices by exploring strategies and subjectivities, new positions of theorization and analyses that unsettle contemporary approaches to artistic research. This includes a series of theoretical texts, experimental framing and a portfolio of eight artworks that were individually and collaboratively created and produced between 2016–2019: *Traces of Motherhood*; *Domestic Cupboards*; *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between*, *Hunting Self*; *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface*; *Floating in the In-Between*; *Carrying Others*; and *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*. Showcased with the artwork are digital and technological ephemera, including curatorial conversations, exhibition and submission text, process documentation, links, posters and other preparatory information. This document also introduces a series of interludes and reflections that construct and demonstrate alternative ways of approaching the central ideas, themes and methodological and theoretical ideas explored in the thesis. Cumulatively, these creative articulations foreground the complexities, process and nuances of Feminist Materialist approaches to Research-Creation.

This document also presents the three main themes which include: 1) Materiality; 2) the Optical Unconscious; and 3) the Technological Unconscious; and, take up the three salient concepts and theories: 1) Carriance; 2) Feminist Materialism; and, 3) Research-Creation. In particular, I argue that Carriance aligns with ideas of care, co-production and becomes a creative way of thinking about connection. Each of the eight artworks demonstrate aspects of Carriance, collaboration, and connection and present emergent ways to consider creative methods, methodologies and expanded feminist expressions. By discussing a variety of projects and creative forms, this dissertation is a speculative art-making investigation that foregrounds human and non-human relationships, ecofeminist perspectives and mothering, opening up the term Carriance in a variety of ways to show how it can be more than one method, form or approach with much potential to challenge, encourage and elicit embodied ways of knowing.

Keywords

Feminist Materialism; Research-Creation; Carriance; Mothering; Landscape; More-than-Human; Installation and Performance; Sound Ecology; Experimental Filmmaking; Drone and Extraction Technologies

DEDICATION

For my mommy, Shannon

For my daddy, Cherub

For my lover, Darren

For our babies, Owl and Haäkens

*And, for the lost three—Snow, Arcus, and Eama—who did not make it fully into this realm,
I carry a piece of you within me, always...*

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LIST OF LINKS

Video and Audio Documentation

The video and sound artworks included in this dissertation are digitally available for further viewing at the following links:

Traces of Motherhood (2016)

<https://prophecysun.com/traces-of-motherhood>

Domestic Cupboards (2017)

<https://prophecysun.com/domestic-cupboards>

Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between (2017)

<https://prophecysun.com/magical-beast>

Hunting Self (2018-19)

<https://prophecysun.com/hunting-self>

Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface (2019)

<https://prophecysun.com/mothering-bacteria>

Floating in the In-Between (2019)

<https://prophecysun.com/floating-in-the-In-Between>

Carrying Others (2019)

<https://prophecysun.com/carrying-others>

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard (2019)

<https://prophecysun.com/nostalgic-geography>

Motion Capture Documentation

The archival links to motion capture documentation are available for further viewing at:
<https://prophecysunmovingstories.tumblr.com/>

LIST OF ACRONYMS

C&C	Creativity and Cognition Conference
CKCA	Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance
DIY@DIV	Do it Yourself at Dance in Vancouver
DIS	Designing Interactive Systems
ECUAD	Emily Carr University of Art + Design
FM	Feminist Materialism
FMRC	Feminist Materialist Research-Creation
LIMS	Laban Institute of Movement Studies
MatFem	Materialist Feminism
MFA	Master of Fine Arts
OOF	Object-Oriented Feminism
OOO	Object-Oriented Ontology
SCA	Sudden Cardiac Arrest
SFU	Simon Fraser University
SIAT	School of Interactive Arts + Technology
TaPRA	Theatre & Performance Research Association
UBC	University of British Columbia

GLOSSARY

Airborne Sound	Airborne Sound or Airborne Noise is any sound that is transmitted at any frequency through the air and atmosphere.
Alterity	The term means otherness or being conscious of something being different or other than the original.
Anthropocene	In 2005, Paul J. Trtzen and Eugene F. Strammer coined the term Anthropocene to describe the epoch or geological era in which we find ourselves today.
Anthropophony	First popularized by Stuart Gage and Bernie Krause, the term Anthropophony refers to all sounds produced by humans, including musical composition using technology (Krause, 2016).
Arts-Based Research	Borrowing from James Haywood Rolling (2013), ABR is neither quantitative nor qualitative as it overlaps and burrows from both domains to address questions that cannot be fully measured or generalized with exactitude (Rolling, 2013, 8).
Autoethnography	Autoethnography is a qualitative research method in which the researcher reflects on their experience through a multitude of mediums to understand the social or cultural context.
Autopoiesis	Autopoiesis means to self-produce or self-create.
Betacene	Borrowing from Cymene Howe and Anand Pandian, the Betacene refers to a testing space, where we can experiment with new ways of being in and with the others in the world (Howe, 2015).

Biomedia	Biomedia refers to scientific or alternative processes of re-contextualizing how biological life; information and unique processes are understood between life and code (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010, 122-123).
Biophony	The term Biophony refers to the sound organisms make in their habitat (Krause, 2016).
Body-Environment-Synthesis	I define body-environment-synthesis as a feminist sensibility that blends together spectator, objects and space in new, meaningful ways.
Body without Organs	Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari, the Body without Organs refers to experimenting creatively or scrambling normative social codes and making use of, and relating to, our bodies in new ways (Deleuze and Guattari 1972; 1980).
Borderlinking	Brascha Ettinger coined the phrase Borderlinking to describe a psychic landscape that links us to cultural prehistory and as a partial object; where the present emerges as an animated temporal loop of continuous trauma (Ettinger, 2006, viii).
Camera Obscura	Camera Obscura is an optical technique in which an image is created/projected/reversed/inverted through a single hole onto the opposite wall of a dark room. The Camera Obscura is also the predecessor of the modern camera/pinhole camera.
Carriance	Carriance refers to how we position ourselves in past/present/future events, and/or, “in a momentary resonant continuum of spaces and bodies” (Vanraes, 2017, 31).
Chance Procedure	Chance Procedure refers to a series of steps, or an order of sequence that captures a chance encounter (Iverson, 2010, p. 12). Artists and interdisciplinary practices often use this method to create works because of the unknown outcomes and improvisational elements. Notable contributors include Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Sofie Calle and Francis Alÿs to name a few.

Conceptual Framework	A Conceptual Framework refers to the overarching infrastructure of how things are linked and put together, and what approach or theories are used to explore the work.
Connection-Making Entity	Cultural Theorist Rosi Braidotti defines a Connection-Making Entity as a receptive, body-machine or cyborg that cannot fit into any specific category and possesses global communication skills (Braidotti, 2006).
Contemporaneity	This term refers to a state of being or making that meshes or imagines past and present moments, memories, objects, and histories together into the same present time.
Creative Worldview	Borrowing from James Rolling (2013), a Creative Worldview is an ontology that supports the practice of arts-based research, or understanding works of art as works of research (Rolling, 2013, 3).
Cultural Memory	Cultural Memory is a mixing of past and present moments together in socio-cultural contexts. The term often refers to explorations of the body, sound and visual forms of remembering alongside implicit and unintentional ways of cultural remembering (Young, 2008).
Dark Ecology	Dark Ecology refers to the horror, stark ugliness, and irony of ecology (Morton, 2010). The term Dark Ecology is closely related to Mesh.
Ecology	Simply put, Ecology refers to the interactions organisms have with each other, other beings, things, and chemicals in their environment (O'Neill et al., 1986).
Epistemology	Borrowing from Peter Clough and Cathy Nutbrown (2012), Epistemology is a related theory to Ontology, meaning how we come to know those things. Or rather, it refers to ways of knowing or what counts as knowledge.

Ethnography

Ethnography refers to the descriptive study of others, or a group, over durations of time. An ethnographer looks at patterns, activities, rituals, social and cultural behaviours, and analyzes and synthesizes this data.

Experience Prototyping

Experience Prototyping is a research method that includes a combination of material investigations, role-playing, and imaginative play (Buchenau and Suri, 424-425).

Feminist Materialism

Feminist Materialism refers to a feminist research practice strategy in which the researcher critically engages with theoretical foundations and materiality itself, entangled with bodies, space, and matter (Mondloch, 2018). Feminist Materialism is informed by Poststructuralist heritage (see Rosi Braidotti).

Feminist Media Art

Feminist Media Art refers to a social movement that emerged in the late 1960s. The goal was to bring awareness of how artists create artworks on topics such as women's perspectives on birth or everyday practices and social interactions.

Feminist Technologies

The term refers to feminist media practices that consider the use of their bodies, technologies, and spectatorship in environmental installation works. Feminist Technologies was created in response to gender roles and media practices in the 1960-70s (see Mondloch).

Filmic Turn

The term refers to our increased theoretical interest in film, narrative, and cinematic sensibilities in contemporary and everyday culture (Mondloch, 2010, xv).

Geophony

Borrowing from Bernie Krause, the term Geophony refers to non-biological sounds from a habitat (Krause, 2016). Global Memory Global Memory refers to an increased awareness of globalized and digitized memory (Erl, 2011, 131).

Heuristic Approach	Borrowing from B. Douglass and C. Moustakas (1985), Heuristic Approach refers to a problem-solving strategy that uses experimental, trial-by-error methods that are not concerned with meaning or measurements, but with experience and not behaviour (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985, 39-40).
<hr/>	
Improvisation	Improvisation is conventionally seen as problem solving on the spot, action-driven, spontaneous creating, or reacting in the moment to one's immediate environment, and feelings.
<hr/>	
Installation Art	Installation Art is a type of art that can be three-dimensional, site-specific, shown indoors or outdoors, in which participants have both a spatial and temporal experience with the work, the exhibition space and other objects (Mondloch, 2010, xiii). The work is shown in galleries, museums, or public spaces.
<hr/>	
Large-Format Projections	Large-Format Projections are a type of slide projector used for large image projections. Projectors were first used in opera houses and theatres to create backdrops. Presently, Projectors of various sizes and abilities have become more financially viable for artists and mainstream productions over the last 15-20 years.
<hr/>	
Liquid Architecture	Media theorist Steve Dixon refers to the term Liquid Architecture as being an abstracted and fluid form of space, or, "a sense of space not frozen in time" (Dixon, 2007, 395).
<hr/>	
Magic Lantern	According to Elwes, a monk named Athanasius Kircher created the first known projector. He called it the Magic Lantern (Elwes, 2015, 79). It could project a painted image on any surface (Pfragner, 1974, 221). The lantern eventually became an overhead projector, a slide projector, and then the current day video projector.

Material Feminisms Borrowing from Astrida Neimanis, Material Feminisms refers to a recent turn in feminist theory towards thinking with lively, feeling matter, or interest in *fleshy*, material bodies and processes that destabilize humanist ontological privilege.

Materialism Borrowing from Nathalie Casemajor, Materialism refers to how all things in the world are tied to matter and physical processes (Casemajor, 2015).

Matrixial Theorist Brascha Ettinger defines the Matrixial as a maternal structure, and feminine. Her term bends foundational notions on mothering and proposes alternative views on what it means to be a mother.

Memory Memory refers to our ability to remember or retrieve previously experienced feelings or impressions of these moments. The word comes from the Middle English *memorie*, which is derived from the Anglo-French word *memoire*, or the Latin *memoria* meaning remembering (Mastin, 2010).

Memory Palace A Memory Palace refers to a real or imagined image structure. It can be mental or formulated into a building. The structure acts as a mental construct for the viewer and provides storage for future memories and moments or recollections (Street, 2014, 31).

Mesh Mesh refers to the interconnectedness of all living and non-living things that consist of infinite connections and disconnections (Morton, 2010). In this way, all life forms are Mesh. Mesh is closely related to the term Dark Ecology.

Method Borrowing from Clough and Nutbrown (2012), Method refers to a style of data collection and data analysis. Simply put, a method is a custom-built tool (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, 33).

Methodology	Methodology shows how research is justified or articulated and the significance of how and why each tool/method was chosen and used (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012).
Mothering	Mothering refers to the act of caretaking and nurturing a small child. It is a daily, meditative practice. Mothering can be also be seen as a transformative experience that can shift a person's identity and offer enormous insight into personal change.
Moving Image	The term Moving Image describes a series of still images that, when sped up, become a moving image. The term is also called a film.
Networked Affect	Borrowing from Susanna Paasonen, Networked Affect refers to how affect continually modifies and shapes our interconnections and joins together non-human, human, and machine.
New Materialism	New Materialism refers to non-human forms such as animals and other lively organisms.
New Media	New Media refers to the gadgets, devices, and tools we use every day to help us access, organize, and communicate information with others (Hansen, 2010, 172).
Object-Oriented Feminism	Object-Oriented Feminism (OOF) is a Feminist intervention movement that takes up objects, things, stuff, and matter as primary (Behar, 2017, 5).
Object-Oriented Ontology	Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) rejects the privileging of human existence over objects, allowing things to exist independently of human perception, needs, and desires (Harman, 2005). Philosopher Graham Harman first articulated Object-Oriented Philosophy, which later became termed Object-Oriented Ontology.
Optical Unconscious	Optical Unconscious refers to what lies beyond the photographic frame, or what can be observed beyond our perceptual limits and understanding (Benjamin, 2011).

Ontology	Put simply, Ontology is a study of being. Borrowing from Peter Clough and Cathy NutbrownN(2012), it is a theory of what exists and how it exists (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, 37). Or, it refers to a viewpoint about reality and how we see ourselves in relation to others.
Place	Place refers to a location in which two or more things coexist, beside one another in a relationship, or an, “instantaneous configuration of positions” (Doherty, 2015, 118).
Poiesis	The term refers to the act of making or combining something new together.
Projector	A Projector is an optical device that uses lights or a laser to project an image onto a surface (see Magic Lantern).
Research-Creation	Research-Creation is a methodology that embraces and merges multidisciplinary forms of artistic practice between the arts, social sciences, and science research (Truman and Springgay, 2015, 151).
Screen	A screen refers to any type of movable or fixed device that filters and/or creates a mediated viewing experience. Screens have existed since the fifteenth century in canvas/screen works by artists such as Leon Battista Alberti or in Camera Obscura, Magic Lantern projections, dioramas, or any form of show in which audiences were presented with a screen-like apparatus for viewing (Mondloch, 2010, p. xiii).
Situation	Situation refers to situation-specificity. Situation-specificity is an interdisciplinary approach to art-making that considers interruption, engagement, public space, location and site-specificity, contemporaneity, an event-in-progress (Doherty, 2015, 13).
Slow Cinema	Unlike today’s Hollywood-blockbuster films, Slow Cinema is a contemporary genre of cinema focused on minimalist and expansive sequences, silence or little narrative, limited cutting and editing.

Sonic Turn	Jim Drobnick first coined the term the Sonic Turn. The term refers to our increased theoretical interest in sound in our contemporary everyday culture (Kelly, 2011, 14).
Sound Art	Sound Art is an interdisciplinary genre of art in which the focus is on the medium of sound.
Soundscape Composition	Soundscape Composition is a form of electroacoustic music that combines environmental sounds and other sounds that allude or give context to the original location. Compositions often invoke the listener's imagination, nostalgic response, or association with a location.
Space	Space can be defined as an intersection of elements that are composed of a series of movements in contractual proximity with one another. These elements are unstable, fluid, and constantly in motion (Doherty, 2015, 119).
Speculative Realism	Speculative Realism addresses the metaphysical, or a reality beyond what is perceived by our senses.
Strange Stranger	Ecologist Timothy Morton borrowed theorist Jacques Derrida's term L'arrivant and translated it into Strange Stranger. Morton's Strange Stranger refers to new encounters with unfamiliar beings and objects, and how these encounters could be uncomfortable moments in time. However, these encounters can also offer a new opportunity to meet Strange Strangers who are just being their strange selves (Morton, 2010).
Technological Unconscious	This term refers to how media is now being constituted in such a way that all of our interactions are structured through different forms of media that are visual, aural, and tactile (Thrift, 2004; Beer, 2009; Hansen, 2010).

The Everyday

The Everyday is a style of art making that uses a meditative and loose conceptual framework, readily available objects, materials, bodies, text, and resources to explore environments and actions in the everyday (Johnson, 2008).

Time-Space Compression

Geologist Doreen Massey defines Time-space Compression as stretching of communication and movement across geographical space and how our experience of social relations, development and capitalism come together.

Triptych

A Triptych is a work of art that is divided into three parts. In historical works such as paintings, the middle panel is often larger than the two other sections.

Transpedagogy

Authors Sarah Truman and Stephanie Springgay (2015) introduce the term transpedagogy to mean a blend of educational artworks and processes that can vary from typical academic institutions (Truman and Springgay, 2015, 151).

Vibrant Matter

Political theorist Jane Bennett defines Vibrant Matter as lively and vibrant, and possessing agency and how they exist in the world after we project and impose our will on things (Bennett, 2010).

Vitalism

Vitalism refers to the difference between living organisms and non-living entities and how they contain non-physical elements that are often governed by different principles than inanimate things (Bechtel and Richardson, Web).

WAYFINDING MAPS

AS OUTLINED IN THE TABLE OF CONTENTS, this document is cumulatively structured over six chapters. This structure is discussed in further detail in the Outline of Chapters section in Chapter One. Throughout this document, each chapter begins with a Wayfinding Map figure that corresponds with the placement of where you are located in the dissertation in a pink colour (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. *prOphecy sun*, Wayfinding Map, 2020.

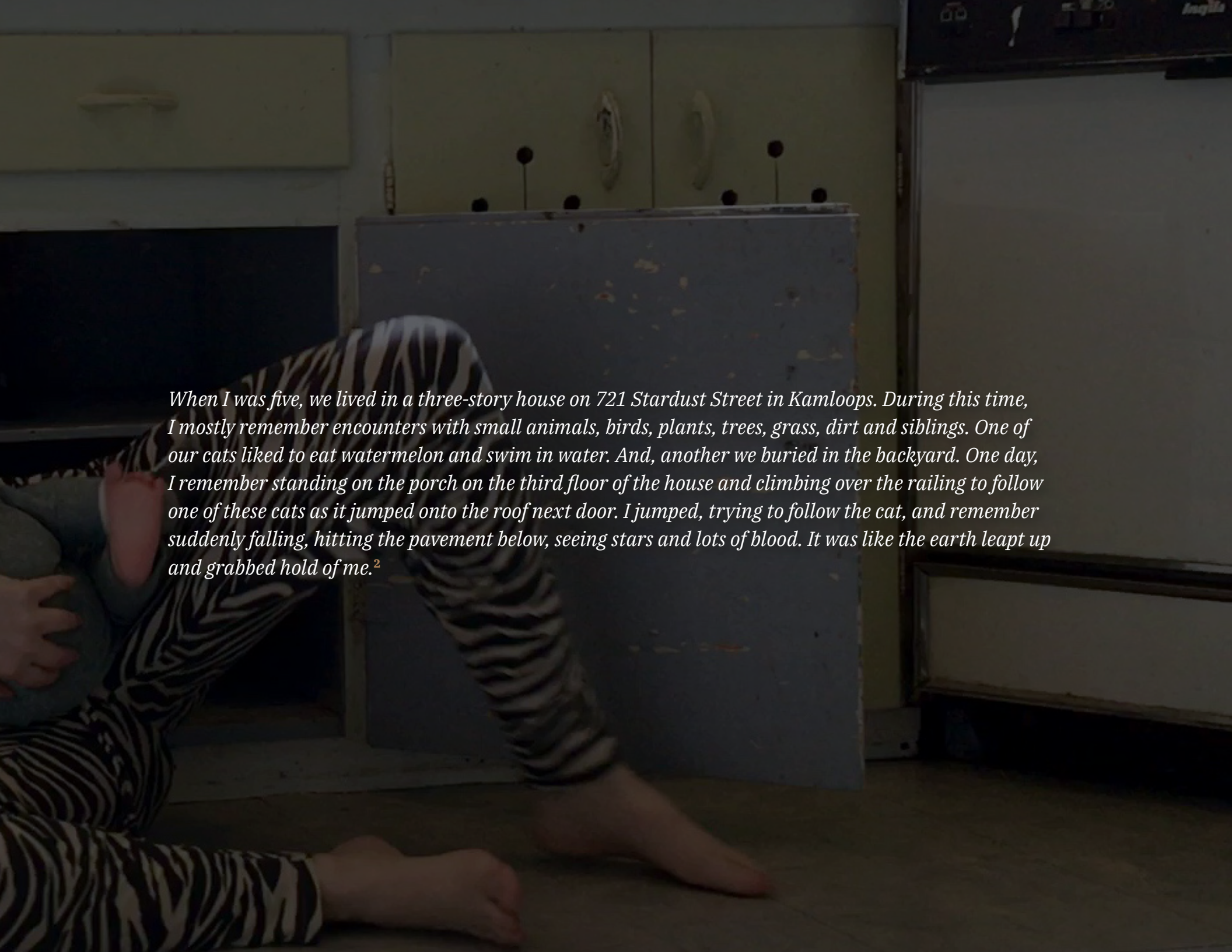
PREFACE

Stories are compasses and architecture, we navigate by them, we build our sanctuaries and our prisons out of them, and to be without a story is to be lost in the vastness of a world that spreads in all directions like Arctic tundra or sea ice (Solnit, 2013, 1-2).¹

INTERLUDE

Memories of Falling



A person wearing a black and white striped long-sleeved shirt is sitting on the floor in a room. They are leaning against a large white rectangular object, possibly a board or a piece of furniture. In the background, there are several lockers with handles and a whiteboard. The lighting is dim, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat somber.

When I was five, we lived in a three-story house on 721 Stardust Street in Kamloops. During this time, I mostly remember encounters with small animals, birds, plants, trees, grass, dirt and siblings. One of our cats liked to eat watermelon and swim in water. And, another we buried in the backyard. One day, I remember standing on the porch on the third floor of the house and climbing over the railing to follow one of these cats as it jumped onto the roof next door. I jumped, trying to follow the cat, and remember suddenly falling, hitting the pavement below, seeing stars and lots of blood. It was like the earth leapt up and grabbed hold of me.²

CHAPTER 1

Introduction



Figure 3. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #1, 2020.



Figure 4. *prOphecy sun*, *Domestic Cupboards*, 2017.

LIKE LAWYERS, WRITERS SEEK consistency; they make a case for their point of view; they do so by leaving out some evidence; but let me mention the hundreds of sandwiches my mother made during my elementary school years, the peanut butter sandwiches I ate alone on school benches in the open, throwing the crusts into the air where the seagulls would swoop to catch them before they hit the ground. When my friends began to have babies and I came to comprehend the heroic labor it takes to keep one alive, the constant exhausting tending of a being who can do nothing and demands everything, I realized that my mother had done all these things for me before I remembered. I was fed; I was washed; I was clothed; I was taught to speak and given a thousand other things, over and over again, hourly, daily, for years. She gave me everything before she gave me nothing (Solnit, 2013, *Mirrors*).

The beginning of Rebecca Solnit's book *The Faraway Nearby* starts with a domestic scene: harvesting apricots, selecting, cleaning, cutting, blending, cooking, canning and preserving them for another season. This process becomes an elegiac effort and meditation on palliative care, managing grief, sorrow and accepting a reversal of roles—where, over time, she takes up the role of being a mother to her mother.³ In the above passage, Solnit acknowledges, laments and celebrates her mother's cultivated actions and unseen labour. In this frame of mind, Solnit's poetic musings remind me about the importance of care, creating new stories, experiences, friendships, and finding homes away from home as a way to move through death.⁴

I am starting this way because it is important that I construct my

own creative map, tracing, wayfinding and meandering through various topical, geographical and personal terrains. In the spirit of other defiant flâneuse such as Sophie Calle, Laurie Anderson, Doris Lessing, Rebecca Solnit, Lauren Elkin, Maggie Nelson, Anne Boyer and Jane Alison who bypass, embrace and liberate structures, this document foregrounds and re-maps a series of eight Research-Creation projects, which draw from personal narratives of being an artist, mother, emerging scholar, ecofeminist and grieving daughter (Calle, 1982; Anderson, 2018; Lessing, 2004; Solnit, 2013; Elkin, 2018; Nelson, 2016; Boyer, 2019; Alison, 2019).^{5 6}

This document supports this idea of liberating space, and stands at the confluence of several trends in contemporary feminist, cultural and creative production today, particularly performance, environmental and conceptual body art practices.⁷ I see this document as a beginning, an opportunity to disseminate research beyond text-based examples, chapters and published articles. In particular, this research includes intersectional feminist perspectives, multimedia, preparatory documentation and digital ephemera and other experimental initiatives that foreground the meshing of live performance, sound, movement, installation and technologies.

This document argues for an open mind and approach to viewing as the visual and written propositions in this Research-Creation memoir are intended to be generative and iterative, and give space for the reader to linger and even loiter.⁸ For instance, each chapter begins with an interlude that features stories from my childhood and adulthood. Each story introduces and foreshadows aspects and themes of what will come next in the document. As Frank Rose argues, stories are signals or detailed messages and recognizable patterns that help us understand, share, immerse and filter through the rest of the noise in the world (Rose, 2011).

Throughout this document, the interludes address the three main theoretical approaches, which are: 1) *Feminist Materialism*—a fluid, research practice strategy that makes visible bodies, matter and space (Mondloch, 2018); 2) *The Optical Unconscious*—what lies beyond the cinematic and photographic frame (Benjamin, 2010);

and, 3) *The Technological Unconscious*—materiality, information systems, computational processes, and the blurry borderline of perception (Thrift, 2004).

Complementing and advancing these ideas are eight sub-themes, which consist of the following: 1) Levity—Flight; 2) Domestic Labour—unpaid work in the home (Huws, 2019); 3) Dreams—sensations, images, ideas and emotions that occur during sleep; 4) Thinking-Making-Doing—thoughts, action and the reaction of that thought; 5) Self and Other—how we relate to another person, animal or thing; 6) Breath—the movement between body and environment and a process by which air moves in and out of the body; 7) Bodies and Extraction—the mixing of human and non-human forms and technologies; and, 8) Nostalgia—a seminal yearning for a past moment or a happier memory.

Collectively, the 15 interludes tell a series of stories that reveal familial and domestic encounters, dreams, unbridled emotional topographies, recipes, bodily and sensorial memories, and other recollections of unseen or invisible efforts to keep me or my siblings alive, whilst also highlighting other contradictions and inconsistencies in parenting. In these departures, cat, bird, tree, and house familiars set the timbre, shape and tone for the next chapter. In this regard, the design of the document demonstrates space between the words and the images. This is critical for the rest of the document to breathe.

Alvalyn Lundgren writes about the aesthetic and psychological purposeful choices made in graphic and visual design and the importance of creating space between columns, margins, images and text—between texture, colour, words and paragraphs (Lundgren, Web). What I am drawing attention to here, be that, on a practical level, is how the images allow for the reader to pause, and along with the rise, fall, rhythm and cadence of the words. Indeed, this aesthetic choice helps shift the dynamics of each section. As Sylwia Borowska-Szerszun points out when elaborating on John Heywood's famous interlude, "A merry play between Johan, the husband, Tyb his wife, and Sir Johan the priest" (1533), minstrels and other historical plays used interludes as breaks

between acts to convey topical, political and social issues of their time.⁹ Today, similarly, musicians use instrumental breaks as a method to synthesize the main parts of an album or the lyrical components for each song. What I am arguing here is the integral way that these interludes operate and highlight their relevance and impact on my practice today. Specifically, I see these pauses as momentum shifts that help convey my experiences through an assortment of memory logs. Each interlude touches on unique life events, challenges and offer self-reflexive perspectives that sketch out how I mitigate, create, visualize and consider the everyday, familial relations, loss and grief.

It is also important to note that this document is cumulatively structured over six chapters. As outlined in the Wayfinding Maps section, the beginning of each chapter, or interlude, also includes a highlighted figure that visually denotes the visual placement of where you are at in the dissertation (see Fig. 2).

Paired in-between these visual structure figures, video stills, photographs and other text at the beginning of each chapter includes interludes which act as a bridge for the next area of focus and tension. For instance, at the beginning of this chapter, *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) is highlighted, in which I enact a series of climbing actions through a set of kitchen cupboards with my two young children (see Fig. 4, 35, 36, and 37). The work references the first interlude through the recollection of domestic landscapes, animals, and the unpredictability of playing unsupervised, and falling from the third floor of the family home. As mentioned above, each interlude bridges the ideas and concepts covered in the subsequent chapter(s).

Inspired by Allan Fraser and Sonya Arden's concepts on tensions becoming architectural and creative opportunities, and Frances Wilson's directives on outward and inward breath providing space for unique musical notation and performance, the interludes present auto-theoretical and self-reflexive feminist approaches to creative practice (Fraser and Arden, 2003; Wilson, 2018; Creswell, 2018).¹⁰ As such, this research draws from a rich legacy of historical and contemporary ethnographic making and

praxis that reimagines the quantified self within the context of a wide array of emergent feminist work and technologies (Ettorre, 2016; Takaragawa et al., 2019; Long et al., 2019; Brown, 2019; Kotni et al., 2020).

I have included these stories and artworks as a way to demonstrate how integral personal narratives, creative processes, and material phenomena are to feminist practice. Feminist practice is complex. It is multi-faceted with deep social, economic, cultural, psychological dimensions and contributes to a rich legacy of cultural production that alludes to the asymmetry of sexism, gender order and patriarchal bias (N.Paradoxa, Web). As Nancy McHugh notes, feminist approaches to artmaking question the objectified female body, the primacy of the male artist, and the aesthetics of art production (McHugh, 2007). Therefore, the interludes highlight feminist perspectives and operate three-fold: 1) to bridge—foreshadow and correspond directly with the material, theories and visual elements of the subsequent chapters; 2) to provide ample breathing space between conceptual, theoretical concepts; 3) and, to demonstrate new approaches to critical terms that deepen and advance the conceptual, aesthetic and overarching thesis narrative.

Responding to feminist writing and interdisciplinary practices that liberate structures such as Laurie Anderson, Oana Avasilichioaei and, in particular, Carol Schneemann, this document foregrounds the creative process and reflects a consideration, and even sometimes an ambivalence, towards regulation by demonstrating emergent ways to make visible, re-present and re-document feminist collaborative process in particular ways that add to the nascent and growing interdisciplinary field of Research-Creation (Schneemann, 1979; Anderson, 2018; Avasilichioaei, 2019).^{11 12} Throughout the following pages, exhibition posters, lab notes, submission text, conversations, ephemera and process photographs and video stills are arranged in a combination of linear, free and negotiated aesthetic ways. The focus here is on extending the material aesthetics, and sharable potentiality of artistic creation and contextual framework surrounding this

research. As Natalie Loveless writes, “Research-Creation mobilizes the artistic as a sensibility and approach attentive to how *form* makes *worlds* and does so specifically within the university-as-site” (Loveless, 2020, 102). Here, Loveless makes a case for Research-Creation as a reshaping practice within institutional spheres. This is an important point because artistic research, thus figured, is not bound by conventional structures, and this is something innately explored here, as live performance, sound, moving image and photographic events are ultimately always in motion and cannot be fully realized again. By this I mean that performances are experiential and transitory for both the spectator and performer. As such, once a performance is completed, arguably, traces, fragments or lingering sensory remnants are left behind in the environment. Put another way, the images of a performance or recorded sounds are situated in a particular moment and influenced by many other factors, agents, and can never be fully reproduced or replicated again.¹³ Moving images, on the other hand, are shape shifters, captured, isolated, ever changing, and in motion. Elise Archias writes about the importance of material traces in Carolee Schneemann’s work and how notes, scores, drawings and photographs contribute to our understanding of past performances, exhibitions or events (Archias, 2016, 77-81). In this sense, however, the remaining trace, afterimage, digital or analogue recording allows for a new engagement, or a re-mapping of a past moment that can remind or entice us to remember the original experience of the event. This document liberates these moments and gives them space to matter. Philip Auslander and Caroline Rye take this idea in another direction, arguing on the inability of images and photographs to document or even convey the multi-viewpoint sensory perspectives and experiences we feel from a live performance (Auslander, 2014; Rye, 2003).

This emergent form before you disrupts standard models of arts-based research by combining art, theory and personal experience and a portfolio of eight interdisciplinary expressions that I individually and collaboratively created and produced between 2016–2019: *Traces of Motherhood; Domestic Cupboards; Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out*

and In-Between; Hunting Self; Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface; Floating in the In-Between; Carrying Others' and *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*.¹⁴ Each of these projects is presented in the following chapters and celebrates the vulnerable spaces of the In-Between in which art, performance, and life overlap. The projects also foreground various forms of data such as analogue and digital materials, notes, conversations, photographs, emails, ephemera, sound collages, etc.

These artworks have been shown in local, national and international exhibitions, festivals and conferences including the Unit/Pitt Gallery, Fazakas Gallery, Gold Saucer studios, The Arts Commons, Oxygen Art Centre, School of Interactive Arts + Technology, UC San Diego Qualcomm Institute, UC Davis, The University of Exeter, and the Intersection Digital Studios at Emily Carr University of Art + Design. This research has also been written about in published exhibition catalogues, papers, articles and in book chapters.

The purpose of foregrounding these artworks, process ephemera and photographic documentation of performances and exhibitions is to advocate for this media as an extension of performance practice. By this I mean that preparatory and other process documentation are invaluable materials that highlight more than the visual act itself. They provide expansive ways of seeing and feeling the artwork and cast light on the temporal sequences that led to the event of action or occurrence. In doing so, this research contributes to the environmental humanities, feminist scholarship and Research-Creation practices by exploring strategies and subjectivities, new positions of theorization and analyses that unsettle contemporary approaches to artistic research.

The decision to include preparatory documentation, exhibition catalogues, lists, posters, maps, primary sources, production components and other art related artefacts is intended to highlight the collaborative effort that was involved in making the work.

Traditional art ephemera has been routinely collected by curators, librarians at universities such as Oxford's Bodleian Library, The Royal College of Art, Philadelphia Art Alliance at University of the Arts, Los-Angeles-based Institute of Cultural Inquiry, and more recently video and audio ephemera is frequently indexed by institutions such as the Guggenheim Archive in New York, the Tate Modern in the UK, or smaller research hubs like VIVO Media Arts Centre's Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive in Vancouver B.C., to name a few (*Guggenheim; The Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive*; Gustavo and Montero, 2012). Contemporary scholars, artists and anthropologists such as Randy Lee Cutler and Ingrid Koenig, Stephanie Syjuco, Kate Hennessy and Trudi Lynn Smith, Fiona P. McDonald, Craig Campbell and members of the *Ethnographic Terminalia* draw attention to divergent zones, highlighting the interconnected, transformative and integral nature of caring for, critiquing and elevating archival and current ethnographic documentation (Cutler and Koenig, 2020; Syjuco, 2021; Hennessy and Smith, 2018; *Ethnographic Terminalia*). Maria Brodine et al., describe divergent zones as spaces of discovery, where new "modes and methodologies of inquiry are articulated" within and beyond disciplinary territories (Brodine et al., 2011, 49). Similarly, one of the contributions of this thesis is the framework for Research-Creation as a methodology. In this document, I include process ephemera because I want to 1) draw attention to the importance of collaborative and relational practices; 2) highlight the importance of Carriance as an integral characteristic of a Feminist Materialist Research-Creation practice. Throughout this document I foreground exploratory ways of making to elevate Carriance and as way to care for these spaces and edges of process.

Backing up a bit, the cover image for the dissertation is taken from the eighth aforementioned collaborative project, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) and depicts the ritualistic process and struggle of building a raft that will never float (see Fig. 1, 116, and Chapter Four). The main title, *Carrying Others: A Feminist Materialist Approach to Research-Creation*, builds on this notion, blending

together three salient concepts and theories: 1) Carriance; 2) Feminist Materialism; 3) and, Research-Creation (Ettinger, 2005; 2006; Mondloch, 2018; Truman and Springgay, 2018).

The first term, Carriance, is based on Bracha L. Ettinger's notions on *carrying* being something we all experience, whether we are consciously aware of it or not; and, how this acquired knowledge resonates through bodily memories from this act (Ettinger, 2006; 2016; Vanraes, 2017).¹⁵ It can be argued that Carriance is intrinsically linked to feminine subjectivity and emphasizes a form of knowledge holding or a *more-than-material* dimension of place (Van Doreen, 2016). As Ettinger writes:

Carrying is knowledge. Carriance is the symbolic relief for a Real of carrying and being-carried, and for its sublimation. In the Real, carriance absorbs the effects of depth-working of subreal strings and threads. While the one carries and the other is being carried, some conscience of carriance, a conscience that includes encounters and resonance of elements on the subreal level, is formed at the unconscious level (Ettinger, 2020).

In this sense, Carriance is an action of real or unconscious moments, between "corpo-Subreal" and "corpo-Real" realities (Ettinger, 2015, 364). Benjamin Kamino further articulates Ettinger's ideas as actions "to carry and to care for—emitted from the labour of art object in art-working" (Kamino, Web). In this way, the term is both political and sociological and intrinsically linked to materiality, bodies and the concept of mothering, which I argue can be many things and take a myriad of forms for different human or non-human, animal, bacteria, species and systems (Ettinger, 2006).

To draw attention to the complexity of mothering as a labour of love with many unseen or invisible moments of care is, in itself, nothing new. A great deal of recent work has emphasized historical acts of mothering as institutional cultural practices; hard, oppressive and patriarchal; and, at the same time, liberating, non-binary, intersectional, multifaceted and experiential.^{16 17}

¹⁸ As Andrea Francke and Kim Dillon point out in their project, *Unwritten Handbook: Invisible Spaces of Parenting* (2010-ongoing), how mothering is universally seen as a difficult undertaking, especially when it comes to childcare support and navigating other pedagogical systems (Francke and Dhillon, website). In the following, however, my focus is not on the complexities of this matter, but on 1) the specific ways my experiences of carrying, mothering, and being cared for have subsequently inspired creative output; and 2) how the concept of Carriance offers a balanced, contemporary othered approach to lived experience that breaks accepted and linear models and paradigms.¹⁹ Mothering has sparked and conceived in me a deep desire for autonomy, agency, fluidity, and authenticity—in all aspects of my life and practice (see Fig. 4).²⁰ By this, I mean that my recent maternal experiences have changed the way I view authorship, labour, care, and how I manage grief, conceptualize and navigate time, friendships, encounters, materials, collaborate on and produce art today.²¹

This document also attends to notions of care beyond maternal care. For instance, each story provides an atmospheric and diffused lens that engages and situates traumatic or life changing moments such as drinking bleach, falling out of windows, balconies and miscarrying within narratives of *Carriance*—receiving, holding space for (Corrigan, 2006) and giving care. Throughout, I draw attention to the various forms and contributions of *Carriance*, interconnectivity, collaboration, caring and nurturing that go well beyond the individual and neoliberal practices of care. Joan Tronto describes the social dimensions of neoliberal care as integral to contemporary economies of precarity. In particular, she outlines the importance of a political ethics of care which speaks to care and responsibility for everyone (Tronto, 1993, 2001, 2012).

Moreover, as JK Gibson-Graham argues, care is about the political imaginary and how attunement or rethinking methods provide sites of becoming, valuing the dynamism of co-beings, more-than-human spheres, and the vitality of the "pluriverse" (Graham-Graham 2011, 3). At the same time, as Maria Puig de

la Bellacasa points out, the dimensions of care are many, with much tension and contradiction, and are intrinsically linked as they interrogate the distribution of affective or relational engagements. In particular, how care work is complicated, existing in more than human worlds, taking up “the livelihoods and fates of so many kinds and entities” (Bellacasa, 2017, 1). She states:

Most of us need care, feel care, are cared for, or encounter care, in one way or another. Care is omnipresent, even through the effects of its absence. Like a longing emanating from the troubles of neglect, it passes within, across, throughout things. Its lack undoes, allows unraveling. To care can feel good; it can also feel awful. It can do good; it can oppress. Its essential character to humans and countless living beings makes it all the most susceptible to convey control (Bellacasa, 2017, 1).

This stance is allied to a growing awareness of care and carrying that goes well beyond notions of maternal and pre-existing heteronormative concepts on reproduction—caring for and receiving care. Certainly, care is limitless and “passes within, across, throughout things” (Bellacasa, 2017, 1). This is an important distinction about care being limitless and in tangential, as Carriance—as both, an action and a concept, verb and noun—is more entwined, delicate, and nuanced.

Carriance then, as both a concept and as an action, becomes a salient and interconnected way to engage with political and historical approaches to mothering and implies a sense of responsibility for each encounter or relationship. In this regard, the term also aligns with ideas of co-production and collaboration, and becomes a creative juncture, or a site of connection, in relation or proximity to another body (Ettinger, 2015). This idea of feminist collaboration and Carriance is exemplified throughout this document, in particular, chapter four, which presents eight interdisciplinary artworks that demonstrate collective approaches to the exhibition and curation, filming, performance, documentation, translation and dissemination of the creative material. The artworks, *Carrying Others* (2019), and *Mothering Bacteria:*

The Body as an Interface (2019), highlight feminist approaches to creative practice, making, and more-than-human relationships. The artworks, *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between* (2017), *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) and *Mama and Papa have Trains, Mountains and Orchards in their Backyard* (2019), on the other hand, present interviews with Genevieve Robertson, the Executive Director of Oxygen Art Centre, and Deanna Peters, the producer/curator of DIY@DIV2017. What emerges from these sessions is the importance of trust and curatorial and feminist collaboration.

Notably, what has also emerged throughout this work is the robust dynamism and collaboration with my life partner and co-parent, Darren Fleet. What I am suggesting here is the integral ways that parenting has unfolded, or afforded creative opportunities to make art in absurd, unconventional, fluid or impromptu ways. More often than not, the artwork was made in extreme pressure situations where time, safety or familial obligation took precedence. For example, I was seven months pregnant with our second child, Haäkens, whilst creating the artwork *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) and I needed extra support shooting, installing and negotiating childcare for our firstborn, Owl. Indeed, throughout this creative process, and others, we carried each other, pushed, prodded, disoriented, intersected and moved into each other’s domains. Some of these tensions are apparent in the interview and exhibition text in the artwork, *Mama and Papa have Trains, Mountains and Orchards in their Backyard* (2019), or evidenced in the final installation or filmic choices, which were often made on the go whilst moving between locations or juggling children and parental responsibilities.

Each event has inspired creative output, new expressions and opens up the term *Carriance* to show how it can be more than one method, form or approach with much potential to challenge, encourage and elicit embodied ways of knowing. Throughout this document, I include ephemera that showcase Carriance—holding, lifting up and supporting and presenting invisible aspects of the research process. This is important because curators,

artists, designers, scholars, friends, partners, colleagues and materials have carried the research forward. In essence, the events have been vetted, mobilized, produced with and by others. Carriance situated in this framework, opens up new points in time and space and enables a multiplicity of creative output that offers new sensorial, social and emotional engagement. I see this feminist approach as vitalist, accounting for and valuing materiality, human and non-human existence and life energy.

Each of the eight artworks demonstrates aspects of Carriance. This is particularly emphasized in my work with art/mamas, a group of nine artist mothers working in the intersections between reproductive and artistic labour (see chapter four, *Domestic Cupboards* (2019). Since 2017, we have collectively exhibited, assisted, comforted and found companionship with other mothers, parents, or colleagues whilst negotiating new terrain and rhythms. This is important because the term collaboration is defined as a form of carrying, which decenters the single voice and embraces supportive interdisciplinary research, or reinforces the central theme, and employs skill and resource sharing with other practices (Hines, 1991). As Long et al. point out, collaborative efforts allow for human and non-human beings, animals, objects and things to work together over time on shared activities (Long et al., 2018). This approach is emulated in contemporary artistic research and writing practices. Furthermore, as Kotni et al. argue, co-authorship should be recognized as a form of feminist writing and practice because it “challenges entrenched power dynamics, promotes multiple perspectives and experiences, and emphasizes reflexivity” (Kotni et al., 2020). Loveless and Wilson describe this space as Feminist Collaborative Praxis, in which multiple voices are equally weighted and valued (Loveless and Wilson, 2020). While, Jacqueline Turner notes how collaborative experimentation and writing are an ongoing practice that “allows oneself to embrace the unexpected, [wherein] writing becomes an act characterized by energy and surprise, rather than agonized labour in solitude” (Turner, 2020). She articulates this premise further, stating:

Ideas of the individual author, the individual genius, somebody

sitting solitary by themselves...Whereas in reality, writing is a fundamentally social act, geared toward forging closer ties between people. Collaborative writing as a practice is about revealing that truth, with the aim of unburdening writers from imagining they are solely responsible for a work (Turner, 2020).

Here Turner reminds us of the possibilities of unburdening authors in the collaborative process. Perspectives such as these are important to research because they bring greater focus, meaning and value to collaborative feminist practices by rejecting the single authorial voice—embracing co-authorship and collaborative practices that can produce unique output, processing, and theoretical framing.

Following a long lineage of feminist production, the second concept I investigate is the term Feminist Materialism. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, Feminist Materialism is a feminist research practice strategy that makes visible multiple sensory parameters, such as matter, bodies, and space, in new meshed and breathing ways (Mondloch, 2018). Rebecca Coleman, Tara Page and Helen Palmer describe Feminist Materialism as an emerging field of methodological and practice work that spans many disciplines, challenges boundaries and creates new assemblages (Coleman, Page and Palmer, 2019). Furthermore, they break down the term Feminist Materialism into two words. The first word, feminist, refers to Hinton and Van der Tuin’s ideas on power relations, politics and non-dualism (Hinton and Van der Tuin, 2014). The second word, materialism, is influenced by Braidotti’s ideas on the emancipation of matter (Braidotti, 2012).

Feminist Materialism is informed by poststructuralist heritage, in so much as it seeks to reposition and question individuality, human and non-human and object, and, specifically, their role in the world (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013). Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman write on the importance of materiality to feminist thought, stating:

Matter is crucial for every aspect of feminist thought: science studies, environmental feminisms, corporeal feminisms,

*queer theory, disability studies, theories of race and ethnicity...
cultural studies (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008, 9).*

As alluded to in the above quote, Feminist Materialism, as a practice strategy, exists *with* and *through* a spectrum of other belief systems, with some intersection, agreement and tensions. These other philosophical traditions include Object-Oriented Ontology, Speculative Realism, New Materialism, Object-Oriented Feminism, Speculative Materialism or Transcendental Materialism, and Vital Materialism or Neo-Vitalism. Each of these materialisms will be discussed further in chapter two. What ties them together is the idea that matter co-exists and material factors change our perception of the world (Coole and Frost, 2010). In this way, all of these materialisms embrace the vitality of matter in all shapes, form and species. As Kameron Sanzo points out, however, materialist frameworks and these types of conversations are complex and need to be continually examined, questioned and/or revised, as new power structures and global capitalist ideologies develop (Sanzo, 2018). This builds on what Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman suggest as material bodies being tied to space, and place, which co-constitutes our sense of self and reality (Alaimo and Susan Hekman, 2008).²²

As it has been mobilized in other scholarly writing, Feminist Materialist practices are fluid, converging alongside and against ruling symbolics, by rejecting postmodern privileging of cultural, linguistic, and theoretical viewpoints over material considerations (Coole and Frost, 2010; Bruining, 2013; Stephens, 2014). Bracha L. Ettinger further interrogates this distinction between culture and matter, suggesting how bodies are mutable, emergent, and informed by what she describes as Matrixial relations (mother/womb) (Ettinger, 1995; Ettinger, 2006). In this respect, as Luce Irigaray and Gillian C. Gill point out, when discussing gender and fluidity, feminist practices are often excluded as the “materiality of femininity is always already inscribed (or circumscribed) within phallogocentric systems of language and thought” (Irigaray, 1993, 107-108). This idea lines up with what Coole and Frost, Stevens, Ettinger, Irigaray, Bruining, and Stephens illustrate as how

polarized or situated feminist positions can change how we view materiality, in particular, how we consider matter, bodies and the vibrancy of things (Coole and Frost, 2010; Bruining, 2013; Stephens, 2014; Ettinger, 1995; Ettinger, 2006).

While in alliance with the perspectives mentioned above, the following interludes, artworks, text, images and documentation presented in this dissertation demonstrate iterative research practices and methods that are entangled. and in the process of making more entanglements (Coleman, Page and Palmer, 2019). Or, put in a slightly different way, this document demonstrates a creative practice that foregrounds interactivity, sensation, experience, feeling, relationships, embodiment, and draws forth a mode of thought that is already in the act (Manning and Massumi, 2014). This last point is further exemplified throughout in the eight aforementioned creative projects, the experimental framing and presentation of this research, and the various exchanges between co-collaborators and curators.

The third term, I investigate is Research-Creation, which is defined as a speculative, generative form of artistic practice that combines social science, and artistic research (Truman and Springgay, 2015). Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk describe it as a methodology tied to the art of living movement (Chapman and Sawchuk 2015). Additionally, in their previous work, Erin Manning and Brian Massumi have highlighted the speculative, embodied, experimental and future-focused ways that research can shift process—with much potential for *thinking-with and-across* creative practice (Manning and Massumi 2015). Natalie Loveless describes the term as a set of overlapping and divergent tensions (Loveless, 2020; Loveless and Wilson, 2020). In line with Loveless, Alanna Thain suggests that Research-Creation is an ongoing, intermingled process that “animates the strangeness in the everyday by reminding us of a lived reality of relation too often obscured by a retroactive distancing between mind/body, self/other, subject/object, artist/artwork, discovery/invention” (Thain, web). What stands out here are the multiple ways that research and creation are intermingled, and, how data and personal

perspectives are justified and disseminated. It is also important to note that the term is hyphenated and shown together. As Thain argues, the hyphen “delay[s] and extend[s] meaning, to render language strangely visible,” and pointedly, as a way to bridge and show the interconnectedness of research, art and philosophy (Thain, 2008). Similarly, Erin Manning writes about how the hyphen opens up a differential between thinking and making and the ways in which these relations come together (Manning, 2013; 2016).

Guided by these three parameters of Carriance, Feminist Materialism, and, Research-Creation, this dissertation takes up each of these principles through a series of eight diverse art projects that demonstrate Feminist Materialist approaches to *thinking-with and-across* creative practice. By foregrounding fluid perspectives on a variety of topics pertaining to subjectivity and materiality, I construct and reframe how creative processes are essential and valid contributions to academia and to an epistemologically and culturally ever-changing world (Ettinger, 2005; 2006; Mondloch, 2018; Truman and Springgay, 2015; 2018; Manning and Massumi, 2015; Chapman and Sawchuk, 2015).

As I stated earlier, I began this dissertation by asserting how my recent experiences as a mother have expanded how I view, understand, seek out, legitimize, collaborate and make art. I now reconfigure and continue that opening thread to propose that collectively, each of the artworks, accompanying interviews, writings, images, documentation and ephemera in this dissertation demonstrate feminist materialist approaches to practice and creation. Based on the premise that Research-Creation is productive, and as Loveless puts it, full of unconscious, “undutiful, uncanny boundary objects...queer and queering,” stories desiring to be animated, I have included projects that iteratively present particular perspectives, narratives, methods, materials, landscapes alongside other contextual framing, to cumulatively demonstrate a practice within Feminist Materialism (Loveless, 2019, 96). Thus, each artwork illustrates a spectrum of strategies on cooperation, skill sharing and collegial exchange in the creative process

and production.

To draw attention to feminist expressions of bodily productions and lived corporeality is, in itself, nothing new. As Simone De Beauvoir reminds us, pregnant women are “ensnared plant[s] and animal[s]...incubator[s], conscious and free individual[s] who [have] become life’s passive instrument...not so much mothers... as fertile organisms, like fowls with high egg production” (Beauvoir, 2010, 511). In this dissertation, however, my focus is on the specific ways in which Research-Creation can be used as a reflexive method and methodology to consider contemporary models that urgently need to account for and foreground feminist expressions and expanded models of materiality, in particular, those that intersect with body-environment-syntheses. I define body-environment-syntheses as a feminist sensibility that blends together technologies, digital and physical spaces, bodies, spectator and objects in new, collaborative and meaningful ways. While this dissertation aims to explain the various approaches used to create the artwork, it does so without privileging one method over another. My thinking here also aligns with reflexive and design traditions that consider, and embrace, personal experience, and seek out interventions as a way to gather data and, in turn, find structural pathways or patterns (Rode, 2011). Sarah Pink cites reflexivity as the key element to the development of visual anthropology (Pink, 2008).

In the following document, I demonstrate an Expanded Feminist Materialist approach to creative practice, which takes up Feminist Materialist sensibilities and notions of entanglement, immersion (nearness), consciousness, bodily awareness and various forms of aural, tactile, visual, environmental and technological synthesis. In doing so, I suggest that expanded feminist spaces and approaches to materiality create new types of engagement that: 1) build new forms of speculative, future-focused, relational artwork; 2) validate new types of material engagement that foreground various propositional forms of knowledge formation, data collection and dissemination; 3) engage with materials and technologies in bodily ways by meandering, weaving, and liberating



Figure 5. prOphesy sun, Feminist Bodies in a Posthuman Mountain Imaginary, 2019. Self-Portrait.

Each of the eight projects mentioned throughout this document find value in co-emergences, the spaces between breath and action, and draw attention to the fluid and unconventional or un-choreographed moments that arise in performance. In particular, this research addresses areas of contention about how Research-Creation and contemporary feminist accounts often fail to engage with methodological practices and research strategies. This research builds on important feminist scholarship and practice from theorists like Judith Butler (1993), Karen Barad (2007), Jane Bennett (2010), Donna

Haraway (2016), and Natalie Loveless (2020), to suggest innovative ways that these ideas can interact, in bodily, artistic, academic and creatively articulated and practiced formations.

In addition to providing analysis and theorizations of the various artistic reconfigurations of bodies, technologies and site-specificity, this document questions the tensions that exist between creative research and practice, and provides unique insight and output on how performances are captured, viewed and expe-



Figure 6. *prOphecy sun, Objects Wrapped in Dreams Wrapped in Objects, 2015.*

rienced through analogue, digital and spatial applications and forms. Specifically, I demonstrate how Research-Creation can be used as a generative methodology that unpacks and foregrounds the intersections between creative practice, bodies, life and environment. In the next section, I delve into these notions further and describe my background as a practicing artist, emerging scholar and ecofeminist and discuss why it is important for me to consider new technologies, humanity and environment.

1.1 Background

This section discusses my background as a practicing artist, emerging scholar and ecofeminist and outlines why I began my master's level research at Emily Carr University of Art + Design and how this impactful atmosphere enabled me to pursue a doctoral degree at SFU. In particular, I discuss why it is important for me to consider, engage, and connect with others through new technologies, digital and emotive environments and shared spaces of temporality.

As noted above, I am currently living in Nelson on the unceded

traditional territory of the Ktunaxa, *s̓n̓s̓ay̓ckstx* Sinixt Arrow Lakes, and the Yaqan Nukiy Lower Kootenay Band peoples. This region holds five generations of my family's experience as settlers including assaying, mining, bridge/dam building, farming, restauranting, teaching, postal working, nursing, and other creative outputs in the rural and urban centres throughout the Columbia Basin area.

My research delves into this history from a place of curiosity by engaging with this history through the landscape, co-composing with objects, matter, sound, extraction and surveillance technologies, and site-specific feminist engagements along the Columbia Basin region and beyond. I define the environment as everything that surrounds us, including energy, plants, animals, air, water, land, fire, light, spirituality, dreams, stories, bodies, matter, sound, frequencies, politics, literature and culture.

Following a rich genealogy of feminist knowledge production, my research draws from various disciplines and forms—meshing academic and non-academic sources with intersectional and ecological perspectives, in order to generate a broader conversation

within the canon of feminist media art. Inspired by media artists Rita Wong (2017), Pipilotti Rist (2015), Marie Yates (1977), A. L. Steiner (2016) and Francis Alÿs (1995), in particular, I am interested in celebrating conscious and unconscious moments and the vulnerable spaces of the In-Between in which art, performance, and life overlap. My work connects to memory, water, air, mountains, systems, bodies and place and critically engages with political, sociological and theoretical foundations and materiality through a feminist Research-Creation lens.

The above video stills are from my master's graduation piece, *Objects Wrapped in Dreams Wrapped in Objects* (2015). The three-channel immersive installation was shown at the Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver, British Columbia. This research inspired me to take up a doctoral degree at SFU, and in turn has inspired much of my dissertation research. My dissertation research engages in, collaborates, and connects to places, people, and others through *more-than-human* shared spaces of temporality. I will discuss these ideas further in chapter four alongside eight interdisciplinary artworks that were individually and collaboratively created and produced between 2016–2019.

Initially, I was interested in pursuing a graduate degree to explore dream-inspired sound and motion performances with small technologies such as looping pedals and other gear. The research evolved to include investigations on mothering and movement in outdoor and indoor locations. *Objects Wrapped in Dreams Wrapped in Objects* (2015), features me a female protagonist) navigating a fragile weather balloon through the mountainous community of Squamish, BC. In conjunction with this research, I also began a longitudinal motion capture study of my daughter Owl (cfs. Kestenberg, 2018).

My current doctoral research seeks to synthesize these two, often-competing vectors, one creative and the other data-driven. My research draws from various disciplines, intersecting academic and non-academic sources, contemporary art, sound, philosophy, psychology, storytelling, modern dance, and related interdisciplinary projects. My research is a celebration of where

art and life are inseparable and inexhaustibly overlapped and takes up notions of environment, body and sound (Johnstone, 2008; Iverson, 2010).

I include the above text to highlight how my dissertation research has evolved, in particular, how the artistic research includes new insight and perspectives on emerging discourse, feminist collaboration, and other approaches to creative practice and design. As a way to begin to think about this process, I draw attention to the emerging discourse around parenthood and institutional art practice. For example, recently, there has been an insurgence of blogs, art exhibitions, and performances discussing the theme of motherhood (*The egg, the womb, the head, and the moon*, 2014; *Home Truths*, 2015). However, celebrations of the everyday mother-child relationship are rarely seen in galleries or exhibitions, except in traditional forms like Mary Cassatt's painting *Mother and Child Before a Pool* (1898) (Chrenick, 2003). Further, in my research I have found that a robust literature already exists in academia on methodologies and approaches to arts-based research. However, standard models do not entirely account for emergent research that presents new interdisciplinary practices, frameworks, strategies, propositions, or speculative ways of considering feminist perspectives on motherhood, matter, bodies and perception.

This reflexive dissertation addresses this gap by demonstrating how eight speculative interdisciplinary projects that I created and co-created from 2016 and 2019 that mesh Research-Creation with feminist expressions. The artworks provide new insight as to why expanded models of materiality and notions of Carriance are an important contribution to the literature. This approach that I am presenting to you throughout this document embraces fluid ways of capturing and disseminating ideas that highlight the potentialities of body-environment syntheses. As I mentioned in the introduction, I describe body-environment-synthesis as a feminist approach to creative practice that combines bodies, technologies and environment. This research is timely and challenges the status quo and makes a unique contribution to the environmental humanities, feminist scholarship and Research-Creation practices

by exploring strategies and subjectivities, new positions of theorization and analyses that unsettle contemporary approaches to artistic research.

In the following section, I outline the dissertation and articulate how each of the six chapters relate back to the main theoretical framework, themes and questions. As I will show, my artworks explore various presentations of the female body and vibrant objects, moving imagery, motion capture data, and sonic fictions that reveal complex auditory, physical and ontological geographies and approaches to urban, and industrial landscapes. In short, these artworks demonstrate variations on body-environment-synthesis by combining bodies, technologies and environment in new emergent and collaborative ways.

1.2 Outline of Chapters

Each chapter begins 1) with an image or video still from one of the eight interdisciplinary artworks; 2) an interlude, which features childhood memories, dreams, notes on maternal attachment, domestic acts and/or chance encounters with death and other assorted arrangements; and, 3) ends with a reflection, which relates back to the main themes and theoretical framework discussed throughout the thesis.

Alongside theoretical and methodological framing, I present a series of eight interdisciplinary creative expressions which address the three main themes: 1) *Feminist Materialism*; 2) *The Optical Unconscious*; and, 3) *The Technological Unconscious*. This document also takes up the three salient concepts and theories: 1) Carriance; 2) Feminist Materialism; and, 3) Research-Creation. The goal of this dissertation is to critically demonstrate how creative approaches can be used as emerging methods and methodologies in research. As mentioned earlier, I support the presentation of these works with a series of interviews that were conducted with gallery curators and producers, alongside reflexive writing, related artifacts, digital ephemera, theoretical engagements and other offerings.

While the projects are arranged in chronological order throughout this document, the text is best understood in relation to the myriad of forms of interdisciplinary work and digital content that includes eight installations that range from single to 15 channels, live performance and full-room immersive installations. Thematically, each artwork is just as diverse with many through lines, such as feminist approaches to Research-Creation, storytelling, mothering, nostalgic, surveillance and performance as process. The exhibitions and performances are also cross-referenced and linked in Appendix A. By presenting media work through various materials, scale and formats, and through an array of representations and feminist perspectives, this document attests to the diverse and generative potentialities of Research-Creation.

In order to build the foundation necessary for engaging with these entangled ideas, the first chapter introduces my practice, background and outlines how the document is constructed around personal stories of mothering, in particular, how mothering is an institutional cultural practice. In addition, the terms Carriance, Research-Creation, and Feminist Materialism Research-Creation are discussed and combined, to demonstrate new ways to make visible, re-present or re-document process as a way to disrupt standard models of arts-based research by combining art, theory and personal experience.

In the second chapter, a number of theoretical approaches are explored including: 1) *Feminist Materialism*—a fluid, research practice strategy that makes visible bodies, matter and space (Mondloch, 2018); 2) *The Optical Unconscious*—what lies beyond the cinematic and photographic frame (Benjamin, 2010); and, 3) *The Technological Unconscious*—materiality, information systems, computational processes, and the blurry borderline of perception (Thrift, 2004). *Feminist Materialism*. This section is further divided into subsections that describe the optics of retrieval from the camera to drone technologies, site/place/space and sound, the importance of art as a way to negotiate and critique digital consciousness and how feminist approaches filter or foreground new media in emergent ways. Another subsection, *Maternalisms*,

surveys the politics and dimensions of care. These are important and impactful understandings, expanding sites of positionality and materiality especially when it comes to mothered, LGBTQ+, non-human, bacteria and other species. I include scholarship about how the economy of care defines and orders much of our current relationships with the world and with each other. I acknowledge these perspectives, critiques, and at the same time, how care as an idea is relevant to the field and discussion of *Carriance* and the maternal, as it is expressed and subjectively understood in the artworks and ephemera that this thesis presents.

The third chapter contextually frames the methodological approaches explored throughout this dissertation. This section is further divided into three subsections titled *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*, *Research-Creation* and a *propositional Methodology for Feminist Materialist Research-Creation*. The first subsection discusses the importance of visual and sonic approaches to research, and how everyday photography and other multisensory capturing devices have enabled the proliferation of media representations in popular cultural discourse. The second subsection outlines the various definitional approaches to the term Research-Creation, and explores speculative, embodied, experimental and future-focused approaches to creative process. The third subsection introduces a hybrid methodology that blends together visual, sonic auto-ethnographic and Research-Creation approaches and strategies for creative production and dissemination.

Chapter four introduces the eight creative expressions that I created and co-created between 2016 and 2019. Each of the artworks is diverse in approach and creative dissemination and was chosen for inclusion in this document because they activate the theoretical framework and synthesize the main dissertation themes: 1) Materiality; 2) the Optical Unconscious; and, 3) the Technological Unconscious, and explore the subthemes: 1) Levity; 2) Domestic Labour; 3) Performance Space; 4) Thinking-Making-Doing; 5) Self and Other; 6) Breath; 7) Bodies and Extraction; and, 8) Nostalgia.

Each of the subthemes relates to the interludes placed between the chapters.

The first artwork, *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), presents a multi-channel installation, which foregrounds the subthemes of thinking-making-doing, and bodies and extraction technologies. To make the final piece, this project makes use of a combination of capture and extraction technologies such as mobile phones, a motion-capture system, video projections, field recordings, electronic pedals and other playback technologies. The second artwork, *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), which I highlighted earlier, explores the domestic sphere, maternal labour, bodily interaction and the potentiality of levity, all within a set of kitchen cupboards. The third, *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between* (2017), is a 60-minute live performance and two-channel installation that explores materiality, sound, and the performance space—between breath, bodies and audience.

The fourth project, *Hunting Self* (2018), is a 60-minute, looping, 15-channel site-specific sound installation that weaves multi-layered live performance, and soundscape composition together with anthropophagic (human), geophonic (non-biological i.e.: wind) and biophonic (natural) sounds as a form of ecofeminism. The fifth, *Floating in the In-Between* (2019), is a 15-minute live vocal performance and two-channel immersive installation that conjures up images of fragmented, reflective and still waters, woven together through an atmospheric composition consisting of improvised, looping, suspended textures, sounds, processed vocal tones, and field recordings. While, the sixth, *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019) presents documentation from a multi-channel artwork, co-created with Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda. This research illustrates maternal, technological and species collaboration by discussing and demonstrating the pragmatic and generative ways that AI, bacteria, and bodies can merge and co-exist together.

The seventh and eighth projects were co-created and shown in international and regional galleries. The seventh, *Carrying Others* (2019), is a single-channel A/V work featuring a series of aerial

vignettes, which illustrate a spectrum of methods and potentialities on how bodies become meaningful using drones and smartphone technologies (see Fig. 103). This work brings the view up close, following my body meandering through an urban park, next to water passages along their journeys elsewhere, investigating movement and unknown perspectives rarely seen or felt (see Fig. 104). The final piece, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019), is a seven-channel A/V work that demonstrates the intimate and challenging process of capturing footage from my parents' home in Harrop-Proctor, British Columbia. The work is an elegiac effort on the loss of my father two years prior. The resulting installation was co-created with my partner Darren Fleet and our two children during an artist residency at Oxygen Art Centre in 2019.

Collectively, the eight artworks incorporate hyper-mediated, queer, feminist materialist and decentered perspectives on subjectivity, time and corporeity, and demonstrate various approaches to fluidity, synthesis and movement with bodies, aesthetics, matter, spectatorship and everyday technologies (drones, smartphone, and other capture devices). Together, the projects make an important contribution to Feminist Materialism by: 1) activating and challenging the existing theoretical framework; 2) eliciting creative experimentation with capture and extraction technologies; 3) working within and outside of the academy and academic models (Loveless, 2020); 4) foregrounding feminist and queer perspectives on time, technology and social systems (Halberstam, 2005); and, 5) embracing posthumanism and ideas on interconnection and relationality (Braidotti and Hlavajova, 2018; Whimster, 2018).²³

Chapter six critically analyzes the portfolio and contextualizes this research in relation to the main themes, and the following lenses: 1) Poetics of Research-Creation; 2) Narrative; and, 3) Carriance. I argue that each of these three vantages are essential elements to Feminist Materialist Research-Creation because they allow for differing engagements and forms of body-environment-syntheses and demonstrate the complexities of entanglement. This contemporaneous approach presents a model to consider feminist expressions and expanded formulations of materiality that intersect with body-environment syntheses. As mentioned earlier, body-environment syntheses refers to a whole-body feeling of immersion with technologies and the environment. Described another way, body-environment syntheses is a product of Feminist Materialism. For example, Feminist Materialism is understood as a research strategy that engages with ways of expressing the entanglement of matter, bodies, and space (Mondloch, 2018).

As a point of departure, the final chapter offers highlights, concluding comments on Carriance and how this work contributes to the emerging field of Research-Creation by the inclusion of feminist mothered experiences on art making, and introduces a series of new research on the horizon.

The following chapters discuss the theoretical concepts of *Materiality and Sound*, *Feminist Materialism*, *The Optical and the Technological Unconscious* and contextualize the aforementioned eight interdisciplinary artworks in relation to the three salient concepts and theories.

INTERLUDE

*Reflections on
Carrying and Materiality*

I have been pregnant six times in the last six years, birthed two, and miscarried another four between eight and 13 weeks. Each of these pregnancies was very desired. These passing's have affected everything in my life, how I view my body, matter, relationships and how I consider my outlook on artmaking, technology, consciousness and liveliness.

During these difficult moments, I would talk with my Mommy on the phone. She would carry me in the silence, understand, comfort, push and prod me when I was too silent.



CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Approaches



Figure 7. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #2, 2020.

YARN IS NEITHER METAPHORICAL nor literal, but quite simply material, a gathering of threads which twist and turn through the history of computing, technology, the sciences, and arts. In and out of the punched holes of automated looms, up and down through the ages of spinning and weaving, back and forth through the fabrication of fabrics, shuttles and looms, cotton and silk, canvas and paper, brushes and pens, typewriters, carriages, telephone wires, synthetic fibers, electrical filaments, silicon strands, fiber-optic cables, pixeled screens, telecom lines, the World Wide Web, the Net, the matrices to come (Plant, 1997, 12).

In Sadie Plant's book *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technologies*, she writes about new media, materials and materiality, and how it is articulated as a temporal collage—one that is complex, dynamic, and infinitely tangled like woven silks (Plant, 1998, 11-12).²⁴ Plant's writing—and indeed her text on weaving women and cybernetics—is full of historical musings on women's liberation, software development and the marginal zones that women occupied (Plant, 1995). I include the above quote because it touches on the significant contributions women have made to the development of weaving, computer programming and telecommunications, and, in particular, the integral and often unseen ways that programmers such as Ada Lovelace provided a unique feminist lens on everyday practices and enriched the greater populous with their perspectives on new technologies such as the Analytical Engine.²⁵ Lovelace contributed substantive elaborations for Babbage and Menabrea's writings through footnotes, transcriptions, and other translations (Plant, 1995). Indeed, there are countless women that have changed the face of technology today, such as Annie Easley (NASA rocket scientist), Mary Wilkes

(personal home computer), Katherine Johnson (NASA space flight), and Elizabeth Feinler (internet search engine), to name but a few.²⁶

This chapter takes cues from this rich legacy and considers feminist perspectives on the relationship between material and digital forms. In the following sections, I discuss four theoretical approaches used to frame my research, which include: 1) Feminist Materialism—a fluid, research practice strategy that makes visible bodies, matter and space (Mondloch, 2018); 2) The Optical Unconscious—what lies beyond the cinematic and photographic frame (Benjamin, 2010); and, 3) The Technological Unconscious—materiality, information systems, computational processes, and the blurry borderline of perception (Thrift, 2004) (see Fig. 8).

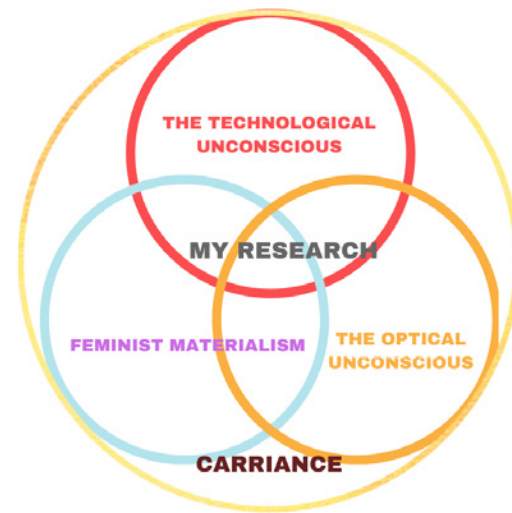


Figure 8. *prOphecy sun*. This diagram outlines the four theoretical approaches used throughout this dissertation: Feminist Materialism; The Optical Unconscious; The Technological Unconscious; and Carriance.

2.1 Feminist Materialism

When we propose a new status for the woman subject in cinema, we start from scratch. We are women subjects who burst into cinema, which we are not apprehending as naturally given, but as naturally to reinvent. We invent a corporeal and intercorporeal cinema. Together, we explore the full extent of what being a woman subject in the filmic process can mean and what that can disrupt: language, structures, modes of production and distribution (Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki, 1979).

In Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki's *Manifesto 1979*, they propose a new status for women in cinema that disrupts everyday structures and modes of production and makes visible new corporeal and inter-corporeal feminist viewpoints. I include this text because it is a feminist strategy that questions and identifies imbalanced power relations and women's subjectivity in filmic process and acknowledges the inequality of cinematic cultural practice as a whole. Importantly, Klonaris and Thomadaki saw the female body as a site of political and visual exploration and representation. By challenging dominant systems and presenting bodies through a hybrid of mediums, which included multimedia installations, moving images and sound, Klonaris and Thomadaki contributed artworks that conveyed sexual identity and extended viewpoints that lived beyond the cinematic. Indeed, in commercial cinemas, the audience is assigned a space to view, whereas, in Klonaris and Thomadaki's work, they opened up the audiences awareness by "reconfigure[ing] relations between filmer and filmed, reinvent[ing] cinema as a corporeal experience embracing all the senses (and not just sight), intermixed all artistic forms and extend[ing] the image beyond the frame of the screen" (Maud Jacquin, web). Indeed, Klonaris and Thomadaki's approach to artmaking was collaborative, radical, subversive, transformative and gave space for experimentation and new ruminations (Klonaris and Thomadaki, web). In the following pages, I discuss these approaches and contextualize the importance distinction

between the terms Materialist Feminism and Feminist Materialism. I also discuss feminist approaches to creative practice, which filter and foreground new media, digital technologies and the optics of retrieval—from the camera to drone technologies.

As mentioned in the Introduction of this document, in the 1960s-70s, seminal figure Carolee Schneemann pushed prevalent ideas on what constituted as art and performance. For example, Schneemann's interdisciplinary practice combines performance scores alongside preparation and documentation strategies and other two or three-dimensional forms and materials that include painting, installation, film, drawing, and collage (Foerschner and Rivenc, 2018). Anja Foerschner and Rachel Rivenc write on Schneemann's material documentation and how her performances liberated the female form, in particular, how Schneemann meticulously orchestrated her pieces as way to "lift her body off the canvas and into the realm of performance, [and how by doing so] she ultimately entered the political arena of feminist art" (Foerschner and Rivenc, 2018).

In the 1970s-80s, artists like Klonaris and Thomadaki, Kate Craig, Yvonne Rainer and Barbara Hammer took up this legacy and explored bodies, sexuality and mobility in front of a camera as acts of rebellion against dominant cinematic mediums. Around the same time, the term Materialist Feminism emerged out of a dissatisfaction and response to: 1) second-wave feminism; 2) modern capitalism; 3) the linguistic turn; and, in particular 4) in opposition to oppressive ideas on gender roles and hierarchy (Delphy, 1980; Anderson, 1982; Wicke and Ferguson, 1992; Hennessy, 1993; Rooney, 1996; Jackson, 2001). Importantly, this movement spurred the development of a wide range of new interdisciplinary creations that embraced the use of technology and various forms of media production.²⁷ Sadie Plant refers to this action as Feminicity—a celebratory reclaiming of masculinist discourses on technology (Plant, 1997).

This distinction between femininity and technology is important and can be clarified further through Jennifer Wicke's lens. She points out that Materialist Feminist practices are media-based

and examine material conditions—the social and psychic and how they develop (Wicke, 1994). She states:

[M]aterialist feminism argues that material conditions of all sorts play a vital role in the social production of gender and assays the different ways in which women collaborate and participate in these productions...there are areas of material interest in the fact that women can bear children (Wicke, 1994).

However, unlike Plant, Wicke's ideas focus mainly on the complexity of gender and the social, political relations. More specifically, the term Materialist Feminism implies a radicalization of the materiality of the body and how it is considered in relation to the biological and reproductive conditions and differences. In other words, these conditions of materiality make it complex and relational.

Let me tangent for a minute and explain this distinction in another way, focusing instead on the term Materialism. As Martha E. Gimenez writes when describing Lisa Vogel's work, the word materialism is used in the phrase Materialist Feminism as a way to demarcate the role that public and domestic labour and production plays in the oppression of women (Gimenez, 2000). Implicit in Gimenez's text is the suggestion that labour is often invisible. Indeed, the idea of passivity and structural relationships ties back to this notion of materiality and how bodies are considered. Jonathan Basile states:

"Matter," as the metaphysical tradition defines it, is not a group of objects (or processes, or flows) but the role passivity and inertia play in a structural relationship with other concepts (activity, force, and so on) (Basile, 2019, 7).

Basile here describes the passivity of matter and how it is in a structural relationship with other conceptual forms (Basile, 2019). This is an important distinction because, materiality, as mobilized thus far, invites us to consider all matter of things that surround everyone. This is the heart of materialist practices. It demands

that we consider it as possessing an energy or essence that is hard to grasp but felt through the senses and bodily perception that are continually shifting. It asks us to examine and feel it. For some, materiality could be the air, a dust particle, a texture or quality possessed by an object. For Mary Kelly, it could be soiled diapers, or for Mary Pratt, mundane objects that contain many little truths with the potential of transformation (Kelly, 1999; Pratt, 2015). For others, all things in the world could be matter, tied to physical processes (Casemajor, 2015).

Materialist practices understand materiality in this way. I see it as subjective, time-based, locational and historically saddling political dimensions, philosophy, and the humanities. As Jane Bennett writes, materiality is vibrant, as is any material such as a hoard of trash because it has agency and thing-power and possesses an ability to persuade or estrange people. Bennett argues that we assist them in viewing, perceiving and sensing other objects differently. In other words, trash possesses an effectivity and independence because it is a vital materiality that deserves recognition (Bennett, 2010, viii).

As I mentioned before, Materialist Feminist artists embrace materiality. However, materiality is a contested concept, and artists and scholars define materiality according to their particular way of understanding matter and its relation/reaction to Western philosophy and varied articulations of the body, affect and agency. These philosophical traditions are Object-Oriented Ontology, Speculative Realism, and New Materialism. Sister-cousins are Object-Oriented Feminism, Materialist Feminism or Feminist Materialism, Speculative Materialism or Transcendental Materialism, and Vital Materialism or Neo-Vitalism, to name a few. Each of these schools of thought exist on a spectrum of political and philosophical belief systems, with some intersection, agreement and tensions across divisions.^{28 29 30 31 32} Where all of these exceptional notions meet is in questioning the passivity of matter, and the dynamic possibility for each substance to exist in its own fluid time and space reality. In this sense, how one views matter is just as diverse and complicated as matter itself.

To help us think about this distinction further, many contemporary creatives and philosophers have furthered our conceptions of materiality by extending our notions of what it means to be human and non-human, animate and non-animate, inviting us to consider spectrums of consciousness, liveliness, and relatedness *with* and *alongside* technology (Bennett, 2010; Braidotti, 2006; Morton, 2010; Dooren et al., 2016; TallBear, 2017). Donna Haraway further unpacks this notion, arguing for humans, animals and things to have harmonious orderings, whereby we adjust our human auto-poiesis (self-making) mindsets and adapt them to a sym-poiesis (making-with) position (Haraway, 2016, 3-5). Indeed, as Karen Barad tells us, matter is an essence, a substance with an agency, not fixed or tied, but in an intra-active, iterative state of becoming—matter, space, and time are constituted together in dynamic intra-activity (Barad, 2007, 181; 183-84).

Extending Barad's concept of agential realism (2007), Zakiyyah Iman Jackson (2018), Hershini Bhana Young (2015), Zoe Todd (2015), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2014), Vanessa Watts (2013), Scott Herring (2011), and Springgay and Truman (2019) write about race, gender and class in response to the ontological absences of these voices and considerations in New Materialisms.

For example, Jackson, when speaking about Denise Ferreira da Silva's work, describes the importance of other ontological perspectives, stating: "black matter should be taken not as a category but as a referent of another mode of existing in the world, another horizon of existence (Jackson, 2018, 622). Moreover, she argues about the mythification of black femininity and what she calls "presenting absence"—"a foreclosing of the being/feeling/ knowing that black femininity implies" (Jackson, 2018, 622). Importantly, Jackson identifies how race and gender are often silenced, or exiled from the canon, stating: "blackness even in its abstraction is entangled with the discursive-material politics of sexual difference" (Jackson, 619). While Scott Herring comes about absence by arguing for a queer objecthood, which aligns with redefining subjectivity and thingness (not forcing power dynamics over another things, objects, or beings) (Herring, 2011).

Young, further articulates this critique of occlusion, drawing attention to the importance of critical race studies, posthumanism in relation to embodiment, and technology, in particular, sonic and visual aesthetics and the way they make it possible for us to see "the black subject as both within and outside of modernity, as excluded from traditional liberal discourses of the human" (Young, 2015, 46). Young argues about dismantling power dynamics, looking into other ways of being with time and space, object and person, beyond historical or prescribed stories, in particular, how sound and visual approaches enable us to see the "special relationship objects have with the category of post-human" (Young, 2015, 46). In this sense, things, ephemera, images, films, performances and sound compositions draw attention to the absented, providing much needed insight into other ontologies, race, cultures, lived stories and perspectives.

Similarly, Todd (2015), Simpson (2014) and Watts (2013) argue other perspectives on human-environmental relationships, Indigenous ontologies, including thinking through material epistemologies, more than human-to-human relations and learnings from and with nonhuman animals. Zoe Todd, in her essay *Indigenizing the Anthropocene*, discusses how institutional, colonial and settler practices propagate systems of power and erase other ways of knowledge keeping, being and seeing the world (Todd, 2015). She states:

Not all humans are equally implicated in the forces that created the disasters driving contemporary human-environmental crises, and I argue that not all humans are equally invited into the conceptual spaces where these disasters are theorized (Todd, 2015, 244).

Todd identifies the vital need for multiple perspectives and ecological imaginations to be foregrounded. Vanessa Watts writes about the concept of *Indigenous Place Thought*, which articulates how the land is alive and thinking, and that human and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts (Watts, 2013). She also discusses the absences of voice in Euro-Western knowledge production and how "Indigenous histories

are still regarded as story and process—an abstracted tool of the West” (Watts, 2013, 28). These are important perspectives that address power dynamics, occlusion, gender and race in the New Materialist discourse, which I carry with me and struggle with daily in intersectional ways.

With these ideas in mind, let us now consider the importance of technologies and matter. Kate Mondloch describes this critical space as a Feminist Materialist approach, which considers the ways that matter, bodies, technologies and space merge (Mondloch, 2018). It is important to note here that contemporaries of these philosophies further question body, culture, history, subjectivity, and our relationships to objects, material and digital environments (Butler, 1993; Barad, 2007; Alaimo and Hekman, 2008; Mondloch, 2018). That said, materiality is pointedly still rooted in the performing body. For instance, how matter is always a material in the process of being materialized (Butler, 2015). Read in this way, materiality itself is entangled with matter, bodies, and space (Mondloch, 2018).

It is for this reason, and for the ones I stated earlier, that materialist practices evolve to become something new: Feminist Materialism. To be clear, Feminist Materialism is a contemporary version of Materialist Feminism. Feminist Materialism is defined as a feminist research practice strategy in which researchers critically engage with theoretical foundations and materiality itself, entangled with matter, bodies, and space (Mondloch, 2018). Feminist Materialism is also associated with new media works because they challenge modes of spectatorship by purposeful staging of artworks that employ body-environment syntheses (Mondloch, 2015). What I mean here is that Feminist Materialist artists use a variety of visual, auditory and sensorial approaches and mediums to make, and exhibit artworks—“not just with words, but *in* space, *with* technologies, and *through* bodies” (Mondloch, 2018). Succinctly put, Feminist Materialist practices engage in a convergence of lively, feeling matter, bodies, technologies, and processes that destabilize a privileging of one element over another (Mondloch, 2015).

I see the heart of this difference between Materialist Feminism and Feminist Materialism in two ways. The first distinction is how the focus is on the liminal space of the performative. The second difference is how new media works reflect a feminist sensibility that pushes bodies and matter into new advantageous, experiential moments with technology—queering time and space (Halberstam, 2005). Now arguably, this expanded model of materiality questions the relationships between bodies, culture, history, subjectivity, and material and digital environments (Butler, 1993; Barad, 2007; Alaimo and Hekman, 2008; Behar, 2016; Haraway, 2016; Mondloch, 2018; Braidotti and Hlavajova, 2018). Stacy Alaimo and Susan J. Hekman describe this contested space as bodies and materiality inhabiting and transforming ideology discourses, to include life and lived experience (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008).

This seminal distinction is also present in current popular culture, whereby female, non-binary artists and intersectional art practices often blend or augment technology and body, inhabiting or complicating our experience and relationships with objects and each other. Take, for instance, Pipilotti Rist, Mariko Mori, and Zoe Leonard’s artworks, which imbue aspects of what Stacy Alaimo and Susan J Hekman deem a material turn, where bodies, material theories, and the material world are considered: together (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008).

Feminist artists like Pipilotti Rist question everyday practices, and social interactions, making work that combine the mediums of video, body, performance, sound and sculptural environments. For example, in her piece *Pour Your Body Out* (2008), she creates a larger-than-human-scale, site-specific immersive installation that transports viewers elsewhere (Rist, 2008). On the other hand, Mariko Mori’s multimedia practice uses video, performance, body, sculpture, sound, installation and photography. Notably, since the 1990s, Mori has used her body in various ways to explore scientific and philosophical theories of consciousness, between, “reality and non-reality,” to the “hyperreal world within *non-reality*” (Mondloch, 2010, 106).³³ In particular, this

work explores various forms of matter, uniting place and bodies, emotion and subjectivity. Therefore, spectators are challenged to re-examine their perceptions of transcendence, memory, time, consciousness, and digital faith when they watch her artworks shift over time.

Much of this dissertation research is based on the historical lineage and foregrounds perspectives and/or responses to recent developments in Feminist Media Art and creative practice.³⁴ The following section considers notions of care (receiving and giving), care time and Carriance as integral aspects of Feminist Materialism.

2.1.1 Maternalisms

Care is not about fusion; it can be about the right distance. It also doesn't mean that to care should be a moral obligation in all situations, practices, or decisions...It does mean, however, that for interdependent beings in more than human entanglements, there has to be some form of care going on somewhere in the substrate of their world for living to be possible. And this is one way of looking at relations, not the only one (Bellacasa, 2017, 5).

As Bellacasa poignantly reminds us in the excerpt above, care is complicated and needs to be going on somewhere in our world all the time, especially “for living to be possible” (Bellacasa, 2017, 5). Care is often associated with maternal bodies, but care work is critically important for everyone, species, and thing (Tronto, 2012; Braidotti, 2011; Bellacasa, 2017). Indeed, Jane Bennett argues about the essential elements between non-human and humans and how one does not exist without the other (Bennett, 2010). While Mary Phillips and Alexandra Hauke write about the intersectional approaches to embodied care, and ecofeminist perspectives on care in relation to essentialist notions of “women and nature as feminized others (Phillips, 2017; Hauke, 2020, 1). Care considered in these ways provides a useful lens to approach notions of Carriance and the immersive ways that care is often endured, carried out and substantiated. This section discusses

these poetics, the political dimensions of care, alongside contemporary feminist artworks and creative imaginings that highlight reciprocal methods, materiality and situated understandings of the interconnected nature of living.

Since the late 1960's feminist activists, scholars and artists such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles (1969), Judy Chicago (1980-85), Mary Kelly (1973), Joan Tronto (1990; 1993; 2001; 2002; 2013), Berenice Fisher and Kari Waerness (1990), Andrea Liss (2009), Natalie Loveless (2020), Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (2012), to name a few, have drawn attention to the maternal turn, the politics of care, labour, gender and the ethics of responsibility. For example, Ukeles' *Maintenance Act Manifesto 1969!* reminds us about unseen labour, care, and how material and performative acts are traditionally gendered, and how change can challenge societal values and notions on care work (Ukeles, 1969). Similarly, Judy Chicago's *The Birth Project* (1980-85) draws attention to the birth process and the many labours of care that go unseen in the process of the making (Chicago, 1980-85). In this work, Chicago and 150 needleworkers from the US, Canada and New Zealand collaboratively made textiles and paintings that were then exhibited in galleries and hospitals across the world (Chicago, web). Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973) serves to remind us conceptually about the many hours spent caring for a newborn child (Kelly, 1973). While Elrena Evans, Caroline Grant, and Miriam Peskowitz present 35 narrative essays that depicts the complexities of maternal care, gender inequality, policy making, within academic and institutional spheres (Evans, Grant and Peskowitz, 2008). They articulate the tensions of self/other care whilst navigating prescribed and bureaucratic directives, stating: “for its part, the academy seems oblivious to the struggles mothers face within its walls (Evans, Grant and Peskowitz, 2008, xxi). Springgay and Freedman attend to notions of care, embodiment and “m/othering,” suggesting how being with other bodies can advance, expose or even create an ethics of relations (Springgay and Freeman, 2009; 2012). They state:

It is this understanding of ethics as being-with that is at the

heart of the m/other relationship. In contrast to popular images of mothering, in which mothers appear with their designer baby totes, all terrain strollers, and put together knowledge of what to do to calm a sleepless infant or tantrum prone two year old, our experiences of mothering seep out of the borders of our skin in rolls of unshed “baby weight,” sleepless nights that even caffeine cannot abate, and the ever present stain of baby spit-up on our sleeves. Mothering, we contend, is fraught with the unthought, the unknown, and always remains incomplete (Springgay and Freedman, 2009).

Here the emphasis is on an ethics of being-with, and how maternal care is fraught with many tensions, unknowns and ripe with transformative and untangling energy. Much in the same vein, Andrea Liss suggests how mothered spaces are “considered obvious and trivial from patriarchal and other supposedly more enlightened points of view” (Liss, 2009, xvi). She states:

Paradoxically, yet in fact holding the same status, motherhood is too obvious in the sense of being too visible, too seen, and thus turned into the obscene (Liss, 2009, xvi)

Liss articulates how notions of self-giving, caring for, and other feminist approaches to maternalism “confuse the normalized order of gender and power” (Liss, 2009, xvii). For Fisher and Tronto, care work is the responsibility of everyone, yet, it is devalued, only acknowledged by a few, even though care acts and actions “maintain, continue and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible” (Fisher and Tronto, 1990, 161). In particular, they advocate for self-care and species inclusive approaches, stating:

On the most general level, we suggest caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web (Fisher and Tronto, 1990, 41).

Fisher and Tronto highlight how entangled we are with other

species and how important it is that we care for ourselves and each other (Fisher and Tronto, 1990). In particular, Tronto 1) discusses the concept of “privileged irresponsibility” (those in power not acknowledging their dependence on others); 2) proposes an ethics of care that addresses care in institutional and educational settings and care that extends beyond human beings, other species and environments (Fisher and Tronto, 1990; Tronto 2001; 2012). Tronto states: “[t]hose who are relatively privileged are granted by that privilege simply to ignore certain forms of hardships that they do not face” (Tronto, 1993, 120).

These notions align with Braidotti’s post-humanist approach which decenters the human and embraces other ecological communities (Braidotti, 2011). JK Gibson-Graham argues for a global rethinking on current practices so that we see the value in care: the alignment, co-construction, cohabitation and the vitality of our shared pluriverse (Gibson-Graham, 2011).

Care considered in this way is interconnected, takes up notions of attunement (Gibson-Graham, 2011). This is evidenced in different models of care such as 1) affection and love for other beings and species, and, in particular, multispecies entanglements (becoming with) (Van Dooren 2014; Kirksey, 2015); 2) the essential role that feminist approaches take up materialistic sensibilities (more-than-human) (Haraway, 2008); and 3) the troubled and enduring way care is considered beyond principles of care (hospitals, care homes etc.) (Care Collective, 2020; Duclos and Criado, 2014; Criado, 2009). For instance, Vincent Duclos and Tomás Sánchez Criado write about ecologies of support when discussing care spaces, which “attends to how humans are grounded in, traversed by, and undermined by more-than-human and often opaque, speculative, subterranean elements” (Criado, 2014, 694). Arguably, these ecologies are complex. Helena Cleeve speaks to the importance of care and material things in relation to dementia patients (Cleeve, 2020).

Aligned with Gibson-Graham, Duclos and Criado, Cleeve’s notions on care, becoming, the political imaginary and attunement, the Care Collective authors, Andreas Chatzidakis, Jamie Hakim, Jo

Litter and Catherine Rottenberb, propose care as the politics of interdependence, and more specifically, about how universally humans should share “care’s multiple joys and burdens” (Graham-Graham 2011; The Care Collective, 2020, 19). Written in the wake of Covid-19, their *Care Manifesto*, envisions a world where care is valued, shared, borders are blurred, resources are distributed in just, equitably, and environmentally sustainable ways, what they call a “universal care” (The Care Collective, 2020). These critiques also draw attention to the politics of care, and “Care-washing”—the discrepancies in what counts as meaningful care as shown in media, by celebrities, governments and corporations (The Care Collective, 2020).

This is an important distinction in the discussion of maternalism because care work and the ethics of care go beyond pre-existing heteronormative concepts on reproduction—caring for and receiving care. Care in this sense needs to be “put front and centre at every scale of life” (The Care Collective, 2020). As evidenced in Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha’s book *Care Work: Dreaming of Disability Justice*, care can be considered a collective responsibility that creates space for sick and disabled QTBIPOC+ communities—the imperfect, disabled, unfixed—and ensures that no one is left behind (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). Much in line with the Care Collective, Piepzna-Samarasinha’s framework envisions a new kind of “prefigurative politics,” which takes up equal distributions of care, stating:

I have worried that as sick and disabled people, we will be the ones abandoned when our cities flood. But I am dreaming the biggest dream of my life—dreaming not just a revolutionary movement in which we are not abandoned but of a movement in which we lead the way. With all of our crazy, adaptive-devised, loving kinship and commitment to each other, we will leave no one behind as we roll, limp, stim, sign, and move in a million ways towards co-creating the decolonial living future (Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018, 135).

Piepzna-Samarasinha’s ideas provide a lens to consider kinship

and living futures. A similar acknowledgement is understood in Haraway’s approach, which outlines care as enmeshed within ideas of becoming and co-companionship (Haraway, 2008, 4-5). She states:

[H]uman genomes can be found in only about 90 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 10 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such, some of which play in a symphony necessary to my being alive at all, and some of which are hitching a ride and doing the rest of me, of us, no harm. I am vastly outnumbered by my tiny companions; better put, I become an adult human being in company with these tiny messmates. To be one is always to become with many (Haraway, 2008, 4-5).

Expanding on Donna Haraway’s notions that we are all materiality entangled with tiny companions and “messmates” (bacteria, fungi etc.), Bellacasa suggests the concept of *care time* as way to negotiate how care migrates emotionally, physically and psychologically beyond actions, bodies and temporalities (Haraway, 2008, 4-5; Bellacasa, 2017). She states:

[C]are time draws attention to, and makes time for, a range of vital practices and experiences that remain discounted, or crushed, or simply unmeasurable in the productionist ethos as we know it and within progressive timescapes of anxious futurity (Bellacasa, 2017, 18).

In the above passage, Bellacasa argues on the vitality of practices that live inside and outside prescribed time frames. This is a useful approach to consider care in relation to notions of Carriance, as “care time suspends the future and distends the present, thickening it with myriad multilateral demands” (Bellacasa, 2017, 11). She further articulates these notions, stating:

The significance of the foodweb conception goes beyond its explanatory power, or epistemic value for science, to engage humans into eco-ethical obligations of care. From a temporal

perspective, these obligations require an intensification of involvement in making time for soil-specific temporalities. Focusing on the temporal experiences of ecological care helps to reveal a diversity of interdependent temporalities of beings and things, human and not, at the heart of the predominant futuristic timescales of technoscientific expectations. It is technoscientific futurity that care time might intercept, because getting involved with soil's temporalities in a more caring way implies a disruption of current modes of temporal dominance in more than human worlds, including their ratification by prevalent conceptions of innovation. (Bellacasa, 2017, 181).

Here Bellacasa reminds us of the many temporalities of soil, and the care associated and involved in this act. Taking up these articulations, this document makes visible stories on topics such as miscarriages, falling out of windows and balconies and other ephemera, process documentation, and highlights images as a way to acknowledge the unseen labour, care work, time, and multiple ways that my practice has been supported, carried and privileged by others. The following section builds on these notions of Carriance and considers the materiality of the voice and approaches to Feminist Materialism.

2.1.2 Sonic Materialities

Both the material, fleshy voice and the expressive voice convey meaning and are markers of identity and subjectivity. Although there is a natural tendency to think of the expressive voice as the sole or primary marker of identity and individuality, the uniqueness of the specific material voice is also a crucial marker of identity and subjectivity, given how it is effected and utilized, and becomes in the course of our life a uniquely identifiable and individual characteristic (Fisher, 2010).

The above quote describes the fleshy voice as an expressive material form that expresses meaning and gives shape to individual subjectivity and identity (Fisher, 2010). This passage also brings to the fore notions of subjectivity and individuality. This

is an interesting lens to consider Feminist Materialist practices that use a range of sensorial and creative approaches to sound design. The following pages consider these ideas and discuss how the theoretical ideas of the Sonic Turn, voice, the spatiality of sound, and materiality are connected. I consider the many ways that sound is explored or foregrounded in other mediums. In particular, I consider how non/in/human voices are constructed of many identities, agencies, forms and live and respond to various locations.³⁵

To begin, in the 1860s, Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville captured the first 10-second recordings of a human voice using what he termed the phonograph (Feaster, 2019). The legacy of this fragment carries an incredible power still today. Sound imbues with it a conceptual presence, a vibration, and a virtual emotion of a disembodied material or an impression of a location—a space that lives well beyond its years. This is the power of recorded sounds—they live on past our own lifespan.

According to theorist Patrick Feaster, the phonograph was designed to capture the trace of a voice, “onto paper for visual study rather than playback” (Feaster, 2019, 14-15). Here, the aspect of a voice having a pathway and being able to catch an audience’s attention through visual impressions on paper, versus on air or through a recording is intriguing. He further posits that audiences today are obsessed with recordings that can be played back repeatedly, stating:

[P]layability has distracted most critics from seeking to understand the phonographs on their own terms, as visible, archivable documents implicated in motives and uses to which playback was irrelevant, and not a conscious or conspicuous omission (Feaster, 2019, 16).

Here, Feaster argues that contemporary listeners are distracted with continuous playback and miss the simplicity of hearing a sound through paper means, only for a blip of time, 10 –seconds, to be exact (Feaster, 2019, 15-16). I include this example because I see sounds as being alive, virtual and, in a sense,

having agency and power to exist in both material and immaterial forms. Whether it lives for seconds or longer—it lives. Neumark et. al describe this phenomenon as live or recorded voices finding space to breathe in other forms, such as podcasting or acousmatic music, which extend sounds beyond the sphere of performance and the origins of where it was first played (Neumark et. al, 2010, 2). Similarly, Jean-Luc Nancy writes on the power of voices: disembodied, possessing a presence that moves and breathes beyond a location. Further, he notes that voices are “something-someone-takes distance from the self and lets that distance resonate” (Nancy, 1993, 20).

Indeed, the twenty-first century has seen the extraordinary rise of new technologies and ways of experimenting *with, across and through* creative practice in response to complex media environments, sound and the ever-present auditory glow.³⁶

Contemporary memory discourse scholars and artists are interested in our cultural history, perception and relationship with a place or site. In turn, some define memory according to their particular ways of understanding memory and its relation to various articulations on the body, history, and technology. These ideas can be categorized into Individual, Collective/Globital, and Echoic (Sonic) Memory (Neisser, 2014). Each of these ideas tends to exist on a spectrum of cognitive, political and philosophical belief systems that augment in some way with events or technological systems. Sound can also trigger memories. These ideas are the premise of Echoic Memory, coined by Ulric Neisser, to describe the sensory register in a person’s brain that is responsible for processing acoustic information (Neisser, 2014, 189-190). In this sense, when auditory and visual information is collected, processed, assimilated, and then reconsidered—a memory is born.

Many contemporary artists have also investigated the resonance and/or the stillness of sound by creating new forms of technological, corporeal, cultural and methodological engagements and aesthetic encounters. Jim Drobnick deems this phenomenon as the sonic turn, whereby sound is established as a cultural marker or perceptual driver of contemporary reality (Drobnick, 2004;

Kelly, 2011). Further, this turn has opened up avenues for artists, designers, scientists, scholars, and theorists to explore auditory stimuli and push experimental research and sound design, spatiality and systems to the forefront in new emergent ways.

Take, for instance, telecommunication systems which are used as spatial tools that extend our hearing, gaze and perception beyond (Ascott and Shanken, 2003, 235-36). Arguably, much like Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville’s phonograph, technological systems have much potentiality to amplify our mind and transcend our bodies into unpredictable configurations of creativity (Feaster, 2019).

This amplification can be a visceral experience, whereby the body and the mind meld. These ideas are explored in Paul Sermon’s *Telematic Dreaming* (1992), in which Susan Kozel describes her interactions as a flesh body dancing with projections of live participants in a bedroom environment (Kozel, 1994).

Jumping back a bit, R. Murray Schafer popularized the term *soundscape* in the 1960s-70s to describe a combination of sounds made or shaped by humans from the environment. Schafer’s research identifies acoustic and ethical best practices of mediating noise pollution (natural and artificial) in cities and urban landscapes. In tandem, Schafer founded the *World Soundscape Project* (WSP) to study the relationship between people and their environments (World Soundscape Project, Website). Schafer and colleagues Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp, Bruce Davis and Peter Huse worked together on the WSP to develop and deepen ecological understanding perspectives on the impact of sound. Collectively, their research has been published through a variety of formats, including a book and play series called *The Vancouver Soundscape* (1973) and 10 one-hour radio programs for CBC Radio called *Soundscapes of Canada* (1974) (Soundscapes of Canada, Website).

In the seminal paper “Real-Time Granular Synthesis with a Digital Signal Processor,” Truax discusses how real-time granulation synthesis develops (Truax, 1988).³⁷ Granulation (aka grain) is a micro piece of a sound sample that is isolated, stretched or temporarily changed (Eckel, 1995). This and other such synthesis technologies

provide artists and composers with a unique opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the spatial environment around them. Some composers use samples and granular synthesis to replicate other sounds, or change the tempo, pitch, or ambient level to encourage listeners to feel otherness or an elsewhere.

Indeed, much of sound research today investigates our relationship to site/space/place. For example, the sonic impact humans have on a location, the effects noise has on a person, or how the material conditions change the cultural memories of a site. In Michael Stocker's book *Hear Where We Are: Sound, Ecology, and Sense of Place*, he argues that animals and humans use sound to build relationships with their environments and place by echolocation or perceptual means (Stocker, 2013).

In David Toop's book, *Ocean of Sound: Ambient Sound and Radical Listening in the Age of Communication*, he discusses the history of ambient music and the recent inclusion of oceans, sand, and wind samples in electronic composition (Toop, 2018). These ideas are important because they foreground our relationship to site, materiality and locations. Steven Feld argues how interactive and extractive sound practices can change the original meaning of a sample.³⁸ He states:

I coin the phrase "schizophonic mimesis" here to point to a broad spectrum of interactive and extractive practices. These acts and events produce a traffic in new creations and relationships through the use, circulation, and absorption of sound recordings. By "schizophonic mimesis" I want to question how sonic copies, echoes, resonances, traces, memories, resemblances, imitations, duplications all proliferate histories and possibilities (Feld, 1996, 13).

In this excerpt, Feld claims that echoes or traces of something can allude to another history. He further states:

[M]ost schizophonic practices are often referred to and sanctioned as transcultural inspiration by artists and critics alike. Which is to say that they are largely asserted as purely musical

forms of encounter. What is typically emphasized is the imagination or intuition that links one kind of artistry to another. And what is typically excluded is how the practices are asymmetrical, specifically assuming that "taking without asking" is a musical right of the owners of technology (Feld, 1996, 15).

This notion is particularly poignant to consider how sound composition is a musical encounter, and how samples are often acquired without permission using technology for playback purpose and change the original sound. Feld thus deems recordings as copies, or resemblance and/or duplications that continually subvert and invert what is strange and familiar (Feld, 1996, 17).

Much like Feld's aesthetic mimetic considerations, Barry Truax's interprets sound as being able to invoke imagination, or rather, link audience members to the source and/or original location. Both of these examples highlight sound as a medium or co-composer of an experience (Truax, 2002). Under this pretense, sound can be translated in many ways, and much like water or air, it is fluid, open, complex and interconnected, living and undeniably mobile and improvisational.

Oceanographers and bio-acoustic researchers have also studied ecological relationships between living and elemental. For example, in the 1960s, Roger Payne made a series of sound recordings of blue and humpback whales moving through water (YouTube). Eric Parmentier describes the ocean as never silent, where sounds are continually involved in, "acoustic orientation, intra-and inter-specific communication" (CRIOBE, Website). Gordon et al, outline a field experiment in which they amplify underwater healthy reef sounds to increase the surrounding fish communities and how acoustic enrichment can accelerate an ecosystems recovery (Gordon et al., 2010). Sophie Holles et al., suggest that above water sounds, such as boat residue, can disrupt the orientation behaviours of coral reef fish (Nedelec et al., 2013). Friesan et al., on the other hand, try sensory-based manipulations to help attract seabirds to newly restored habitats and other conservation sites (Friesan et al., 2017). The above examples show how sound is implemented in other academic

capacities outside musical composition.

Much of this research has spurred a new wave of contemporary sound studies in a multitude of ways. For example, artist Carmen Braden composes works from ice blocks from the sub-arctic (Braden, Website). And, Milleece composes music with plants by amplifying their frequencies (Kurutz, 2013). Fellow musicians, Leah Abramson's *Songs for a Lost Pod* (2017) and Kellarissa's *Ocean Electric* (2019), conceptualize vocal albums based on water and orca samples, marine mammal history and scientific research (Abramson, 2017; Kellarissa, 2019). While, in their book, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening*, Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter study the aural architecture and sonic tracings of buildings like churches and what the walls say (Blesser and Salter, 2007). Much of this research explores our relationship to sound, and how prominent sounds can mask other sounds in an environment.

Over the last decade, there has also been a resurgence of improvisational or *being with* approaches that examine our impact on the environment and how we use technological artifacts to transmit or understand our corporeal voice (Critchley, 2008). What Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari refer to as acts of becoming, or a responsiveness in relation to our environment—what Nance Klehm suggests as best practices to appreciate the world around us by getting in tune with the soil under our feet (Deleuze et. al, 1999; Klehm, 2019). Contemporary Feminist Materialist artists build on this legacy to create work that re-imagines sound and place. For example, artist Madam Data (Ada Adhiyatma) uses machine interfaces, computer programs, field recordings and old samplers as tools to explore embodied ideas of distance and echolocation and how bodies and spaces are defined by separations and dislocation (Adhiyatma, website). Political geographer and sound artist Anja Kanngieser create podcasts on the inaudible, anthropocentrism, climate change and our response to the world around us (Kanngieser, Web). Other organizations such as NASA are designing objects to understand the levels of noise pollution. For example, NASA's project Design

Environment for Novel Vertical Lift Vehicles (DELIVER) has developed a series of psychoacoustic tests to determine how much noise is generated by flying machines (Christine and Cabell, 2017).^{39 40} Other researchers are also studying a phenomenon called the global hum. Since the 1970s, people worldwide have reported hearing a hum, or a consistent low frequency pitched noise. The World Hum Map and Database (WHMD) was created in response to detect and document this phenomenon. Participants worldwide pin their experience, location and date the time of when they heard the frequency through a public interactive map (Jaekl, 2019).

I mention these examples to draw attention to 1) the possibilities of sound; 2) the systematic differences between aerial and ground technologies; and, 3) how the frequencies or levels of disturbance mitigate, change our perception and experience in specific environments. Feminist Materialist practices consider care, aspects of memory discourse, our relation to site and place, and take up sound as a medium that can defy boundaries and make work that is an augmented and creates instantaneous immersive configurations. The next section builds from these ideas and discusses the theoretical approach, the *Optical Unconscious*, and the development of optical tools to capture what is beyond our frame of perceptual awareness and understanding.

2.2 *Optical Unconscious*

This section discusses the second theoretical approach, the *Optical Unconscious*, which refers to what lies beyond the cinematic and photographic frame (Benjamin, 2010). I articulate how the invention of the magic lantern, the telescope, optical devices and the projector have invited new ways of bodily and material engagement. It is important to discuss this development of optical tools to frame Feminist Materialist practices.

As a starting point, the term *Optical Unconscious* was first coined by Walter Benjamin to describe what can be observed beyond human perceptual limits and understanding (Benjamin, 2010).⁴¹ Succinctly put, what people can or cannot see. The term

unconscious refers to how a person's mind can be in a state of resting, without thought, or unaware of what is happening around them. In this sense, the term suggests an unconscious and complex state of being. For Freud, the term unconscious refers to our capacity for irrational and unexplained responses or behaviour. In this articulation, the unconscious drives human decisions between known and unknown. In many ways, this desire to see beyond ourselves is an articulation, response *to*, or a reflection *of*, the philosophical and biological ties and tensions between the mind and body. Take, for instance, Plato's ideas about a person's soul being tied to their body with no means of escaping it (Olshewsky, 1976). For Arnold-Forster, projections were a form of dream control in which she flew through rooms of a home (Arnold-Forster, 1921).⁴² For contemporary artists, this could be projection mapping images and video across a variety of objects, building structures or transporting via Virtual Reality headsets or conferencing over Skype and FaceTime. Rene Descartes, of course, argues for the separateness of soul and flesh, but this desire to see what is beyond our understanding nevertheless remains.

Historically, Sigmund Freud used telescopes and optical devices such as the "photo-graphic apparatus" (camera) to experiment and conceptualize ideas on human perception and psychological processes (Freud, 2013). Later on, the first projections were created using different devices or tools such as the Magic Lantern (Elwes, 2015, 79). Magic Lanterns could project a painted image onto any surface (Pfragner, 1974, 221). The Magic Lantern eventually became the overhead projector, slide projector, and then the current-day video projector. Of note, the first large-scale projectors were built to create background ambience and support performances in opera houses and theatres.⁴³

Optical devices like telescopes or Magic Lanterns and projectors allow for things to be revealed. Rosalind Krauss conceptualizes the Optical Unconscious as a physical and metaphorical state of being (Krauss, 1994). What this implies is that awareness exists dualistically. Smith and Sliwinski bridge these notions, stating how

photographs are forward-looking documents—helping humans view and expose things, objects, and unconscious movements that happen all around, past, or through perceptual range. They suggest that images are "prosthetic vision helpers, extending the realm of possibility and visibility by enabling humans to see what is hidden, and view what is imperceptible to the eyes, demonstrating the reach and complexity of unconscious perception" (Smith, 2017, 14). In this way, photographs can, "anticipate a future viewer who will recognize in it a spark of contingency that cannot be contained to one temporal moment" (Smith and Sliwinski, 2017, 11; Smith 2014). What I am drawing attention to here is how photography freezes moments, enlarges fragments and enables humans to witness moments that cannot otherwise be seen or consciously detected.

Sigmund Freud argues the power of the unconscious through the use of the telescope and optical devices such as the "photo-graphic apparatus" (camera). Freud used these devices as a way to conceptualize psychological processes. He believed that many of people's experiences are captured and live in their memories, and remain unconscious; every object can be used to capture their internal perception of the virtual, "like the image produced in a telescope by the passage of light-rays" (Freud, 2013, 611).

Inspired by Sigmund Freud's concept of the unconscious mind, Walter Benjamin took up these ideas alongside his interest in the way photography offered unprecedented access to unseen details and focused moments in time. He states the optical unconscious as being linked to photography: "It is through photography that [people] first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as [people] discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis" (Benjamin, 2005, 10-12).

In Benjamin's time, portraiture photography required patrons to stand still for a minute. Currently, pictures are taken faster than people can breathe, and they often do not stop to observe the moment or appreciate the act of making. Benjamin's description of this idea, and his term the optical unconscious, accounts for

what lies beyond the photographic frame, what can be observed beyond human understanding; the obscured and unseen, beyond the realm of human understanding and perceptual limits; beyond human control. He argues that these unknowns, these unseen moments, can be captured with a cinematic or photographic lens. How every day, “the need to possess the object in close-up in the form of a picture or rather a copy becomes more imperative. The difference between the copy, which illustrated papers and news-reels keep in readiness, and the original picture is unmistakable. Uniqueness and duration are intimately intertwined in the latter as are transience and reproducibility in the former” (Benjamin, 2010, 23). Thus, the lens has a unique ability to record aspects of reality to allow people to see beyond their understanding of time and space, by picking up the ripples, hidden movements, the tiniest details that they cannot see or hear, because they are too small or quick and are in perpetual motion.

The lens can reveal a world that can only be partially perceived. For example, human retinas may receive some of this information, yet will not be able to translate or perceive the specific details of this information. Benjamin argues that the invention of photography and cinema has changed our perceptual limits, allowing for human eyes to see information that they cannot usually see or perceive at the same speed of the encounter (Benjamin, 2010, 3-4). These ideas account for the power of photography: how photography can revolutionize a person’s ability to see beyond what they inhabit and expand upon and allow for a deconstruction of everyone’s present-day understanding of the unconscious. This brings up the notion of how information today is revealed and shared via smartphones and or various media devices in the everyday.⁴⁴

Benjamin sums up the contemporary scenario on how people take up information as a, “procedure itself [that] cause[s] the subject to focus his life at the moment rather than hurrying on past it” (Benjamin, 2010). These ideas are even more pertinent today, as access to handheld cameras and devices offer instant gratification for making selfies. In this way, the lens has changed

human perception of subjectivity and selfhood. Arguably, the rapid advancement of optical technologies has enabled artists and filmmakers to portray seemingly ineffable gestures with a facility and immediacy that was not possible only a short time ago (Cadena, 2006). Also, the variety of artistic forms and genres that develop with these technologies demonstrate the elastic potential of optical apparatus to generate, innovative aesthetic fragments and ethereal visual landscapes. What this suggests is that, as technologies develop in their sophistication, they provide avenues for visual clarity and hold ample space for us to see ourselves elsewhere. Indeed, contemporary Virtual Reality environments can also achieve near realism through the incorporation of digital graphics and immersive soundscapes projected into virtual spaces (Bailenson et al., 2005).

The following section, *the Technological Unconscious*, discusses these ideas further, and how technological devices and applications such as Virtual Reality, telepresence, drones, cameras, Web, satellites, and smartphones are used as actants to help translate, transform or generate new encounters.

2.3 Technological Unconscious

The *Technological Unconscious* is conceptually intertwined with Walter Benjamin’s ideas of the *Optical Unconscious*—an actualization of post-personal, in which technology is all matter of things such as bodies, environments, and devices (Benjamin, 2010; Clough, 2000, 3). However, the following pages clarify the difference, as both terms may seem similar, yet, in actuality, they are radically different in contextualization. The following pages present the various ways of defining the term and the importance of these ideas in relation to Feminist Materialist practices.

The Technological Unconscious can be described as offering alternative viewpoints on the expansive nature of communication systems, between bodies and space, media technologies, and what we consider reality (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010; Smith and Sliwinski, 2017; Scannell, 2017; Thacker, 2010; Thrift, 2004). Indeed, as Roy Ascott and Edward A. Shanken argue,

telecommunication systems become tools to extend our gaze and perception beyond—amplifying our mind and transcending our bodies into unpredictable configurations of creativity (Ascott and Shanken, 2003, 235-36). This amplifying is can be a visceral experience, whereby the body and the mind meld. Similarly, Nigel Thrift writes on the *Technological Unconscious* as a way to discuss materiality, information systems, computational processes, and the blurry borderline of perception—where media is now constituted in such a way that it structures our interactions (Thrift, 2004, 175-177). Mitchell and Hansen further note, how our minds can be compared to mediums: “entail[ing] the internal display, projection, or storage and retrieval of images” (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010, 41).

The Technological Unconscious in this sense, is complex, meshed, and arguably at the same time: fluid. Bernard Stiegler reminds us how our society is full of information systems which help us to remember and retrieve memories (Stiegler, 2010). Indeed, another way to consider these ideas is to discuss how memories are often elusive and difficult to capture, and how we use artificial memory aids to help us think, and move forward in our daily routines (Stiegler, 2010, 65). However, as Stiegler points out: 1) devices become exteriorization of our consciousness by helping us remember events and details—aiding us in the process of imagining (Stiegler, 2010, 3-15; 64-65); and, 2) there is a relationship between the number of times we use a tool, artifact, and language and how this helps us to process, remember and experience a memory from another time (Stiegler, 2010, 65). What this implies is that hypothetically, we could remember someone else’s memory or versions of reality.⁴⁵ Stiegler defines this phenomenon as *Digital Hypomnemata*—digital memory aid (Stiegler, 2010). Much of his research is based on Plato’s historical term Anamnesis—recollection. In Stiegler’s assessment, we are becoming *with* technology so that we can receive or broadcast our memories elsewhere (Hansen, 2010, 64).

Donna Haraway and Katerine Halyes define this current state of being *with* technology as Posthumanism (Haraway, 1991; Halyes,

2008). As Francesca Ferrando argues, Posthumanism has become an umbrella term that refers to the human and the technological developments over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Ferrando, 2013). However, she posits posthumanism decentres the human and is concerned with ecosystems of relations (Ferrando, 2013). She states:

In tune with antihumanism, posthumanism stresses the urgency for humans to become aware of pertaining to an ecosystem which, when damaged, negatively affects the human condition as well. In such a framework, the human is not approached as an autonomous agent, but is located within an extensive system of relations (Ferrando, 2013, 32).

Here Ferrando suggests that posthumanism takes up a theoretical approach which expands the borders of human imagination—beyond the human to embrace instead a system of relations (Ferrando, 2013). She further suggests that posthumanism offers a balanced approach to sustaining the present and the future, stating:

Posthumanism keeps a critical and deconstructive standpoint informed by the acknowledgement of the past, while setting a comprehensive and generative perspective to sustain and nurture alternatives for the present and for the futures. Within the current philosophical environment, posthumanism offers a unique balance between agency, memory, and imagination, aiming to achieve harmonic legacies in the evolving ecology of interconnected existence (Ferrando, 2013, 32).

This excerpt outlines the fundamental ways that posthumanism create imaginative and interconnected ways of approaching the world and systems.

Now that said, historical and contemporary artworks arguably provide a foundational lens to discover new perceptions on posthumanism, reality and ways to help us to unconsciously decipher new points of space (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010; Benjamin, 2011; Buck-Morss, 199). That said, many media theorists

and artists have found unique ways that showcase their abilities to translate reality, consciousness and create sensorial artifacts that leave traces of themselves through various mediums, styles, and artefacts. In this sense, as discussed in earlier sections, contemporary artworks, in particular, feminist pieces offer audiences immersive and transformative experiences and new ways of seeing or viewing aspects of time, or opportunities to uncover unique perspectives or discover emergent ways of being with objects, matter, animals, through the lens of the Technological Unconscious (Thrift, 2004; Thacker, 2010; Smith and Sliwinski, 2017). These translations can illustrate how portrayals of time and collective or cultural memory shift with the aid of technology, moving between past, present, imagined, pseudo-historical and contemporary (Erl, 2011; Young, 2008), and then take root in another space other than the original inspiration (Arnold-Forster, 1921; Denys, 1982; Farr, 2012).

Braidotti's view of the Technological Unconscious aligns with Haraway's arguments on posthumanistic relationality. For example, how a posthuman is not topologically bound, indeed, more of a nomadic thinker, who transitions between technology systems, networks, and place. This is important because as she states: "location is a materialist temporal and spatial site of co-production of the subject, and thus anything but an instance of relativism" (Braidotti, 2006, 199). In this way, our relationships are connected to a location, which is then an embodied space of memory, "activated by the resisting thinker against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2006, 199). What is gleaned from these ideas is the importance of being technologically nomadic.

Jumping back a bit, Benjamin's time was a time of war, extreme nationalism, economic crisis, and mass convergence and accelerated communication, much like the present era. Whereas, currently, we are still replicating ourselves to no end. For example, more photographs and multiple versions of ourselves are taken, circulated, and shared on media platforms and social sites. In this way, as David Beer writes, we are losing agency with the aid of

technology and algorithmic systems meld with our everyday, as it is media in constituted ways so that it structures our rhythms; how we are consuming and generating information online, at home, at work and in the between spaces, using smartphones and laptops. In particular, Beer outlines the persuasive nature of technology and the, "implications of software 'sinking' into and 'sorting' aspects of [a person's] everyday" (Beer, 2009, 985).

In this way, we can become increasingly more dematerialized and vulnerable, accepting the noise, becoming less present in our daily rhythms; giving considerable power to social media algorithmic systems to dictate whom we connect with, what products we buy and what articles we read. Moreover, Suzan Buck-Morss's seminal ideas on the implications of having technology accepted into everyone's daily life practices seem more pertinent than ever before (Buck-Morss, 1992). Morss stipulates that everyone is implicated in an exchange of power, integrating technology into daily life practices as tools and as weapons that extend human relationships, while, "at the same time intensifying the vulnerability of what [Walter] Benjamin called the tiny, fragile human body" (Buck-Morss, 1992, 33). Buck-Morss further states how the use of technology becomes a protective shield like, "a physical body divorced from sensory vulnerability," or perhaps, "a statistical body; a performing body; a virtual body, one that can endure the shocks of modernity without pain" (Buck-Morss, 1992, 33).

More recently, arguably, Feminist Materialist practices have employed the use of virtual, telepresence bodies as a digital strategy for artmaking and production. The term telepresence refers to distant (tele) presence, and ideas of working across mediums, time and space. The idea was created by Marvin Minsky in the 1980's to describe a form of "remote presence," where one could feel physically present through an instrument in a separate location (Minsky, web). J. V Draper refined this definition to include experiential telepresence, defined as, "a mental state in which a user feels physically present within a computer-mediated environment" (Draper et al., 1998). J. Steuer (1995) suggests that telepresence provides audiences with a

compelling sense of being present in a mediated virtual environment (Steuer, 1992). Biocca et al., describe how the term is important when defining how audiences perceive, experience and conceptualize virtual environments (Biocca et al., 1995).

I see telepresence as a creative opportunity which provides viewers with the ability to oscillate between immersion and representation, from system to system, moment to moment. Katherine Hayles suggests that humans will embrace a paradigm shift from human to posthuman, in which consciousness and information can be held in various artificially produced bodies (Hayles, 2008); led by a transition from levels of embodiment (presence and absence of the body and its parts) to levels of order in information (Sommerer, 1993).

According to Lev Manovich, the spectator exists in a single coherent space, both the physical space and the virtual space. Further, the spectator or, “audience has a double identity [and] simultaneously exists in physical space and in the space of representation” (Manovich, 2001). Here, Manovich argues that audiences continually flip between immersion and engagement. Additionally, in the phrase we, “simultaneously exist in physical space and in the space of re-presentation,” Manovich poetically describes how the performer and audience can exist simultaneously in a physical and virtual space (Manovich, 2001).

Many have explored notions of corporeality and the relationship between the physical and virtual self through telepresence performance. These ideas are explored in Paul Sermon’s *Telematic Dreaming* (1992), in which Susan Kozel describes her interactions as a flesh body dancing with projections of live participants in a bedroom environment (Kozel, 1994). In the piece, audiences were invited to interact with a projected video image of the performer, Kozel, on a bed. During the interaction, Kozel was physically present in another location, but could see how the audience interacted with her through a live video feed sent between the locations. Kozel describes the close connection between her physical and virtual sensations stating: “Telepresence has been called an out-of-body experience, yet what intrigues me is the return to

the body which is implied by any voyage beyond it” (Kozel, 1994). Here Kozel is suggesting that the body and mind mesh together to create an intimate encounter *with* technology.⁴⁶

The next section discusses how autonomous ground, airborne machines, technological apparatus and handheld devices have provided ways to extend, and teleport feminist artists practices beyond their bodies.

2.3.1 Drone, Smartphone, Surveillance and Extraction

In his seminal book *Understanding a Photograph*, John Berger charts the changes in photography over the twentieth century; examining the impact images have had on the ways we view and respond to things. He states:

By their nature, photographs have little or no property value because they have no rarity value. The very principle of photography is that the resulting image is not unique, but on the contrary infinitely reproducible. Thus, in twentieth-century terms, photographs are records of things seen (Berger, 2013, 291).

Against this backdrop, this section continues this excavation on unconscious systems, technologies and discusses how the twenty-first century has seen the unprecedented rise of robots, autonomous ground and airborne machines, and other technological apparatus and devices that aid, extend, and teleport feminist artists and other creatives reach beyond. In particular, I discuss how the rapid advancement of technologies has created a proliferation of consumer-grade versions in the market, opening up avenues for civilians to adapt this technology for recreation, agriculture, surveillance, art and photography and other emerging applications (Floreano, 2015; Howell, 2018; Stubblefield, 2020).

Since 1911, drones have been used by the military for missile and weapons testing, surveillance, aerial refueling, air strikes, cargo transportation, and geological surveying and mapping (Remy,

2011).⁴⁷ More recently, drones have migrated into everyday cultural arenas such as theatre, installation, film, photography, performance art, and sound. Thomas Stubblefield suggests that the majority of drone art does not take up the inherited, political entanglements of violence, between military and civilian, and is instead pointedly reimagining, re-appropriating this technology into new spheres (Stubblefield, 2020).⁴⁸ Stubblefield further states how drone art allows for distributed modes of authorship and fluid approaches to dissemination (via mobile navigation, online networks, GPS, Satellites, apps). As a result, contemporary artists use Virtual Reality, drones, cameras, the Web, satellites, and smartphones as actants to help them translate, transform or generate new aesthetic fragments and encounters with ethereal visual and auditory landscapes.

For example, institutions like Bard College's Centre for the Study of the Drone have been examining the opportunities and complicated political and social challenges of using drone technologies in both the military and civilian sphere (Center for the Study of the Drone, Website). Artist Kathryn Brimblecombe-Fox's work examines the aesthetics of drone warfare through visual means (Brimblecombe-Fox, Website).

In their booklet, *A Study into 21st Century Drone Acoustics*, artists Gonçalo F. Cardoso and Ruben Pater offer field recordings of 17 drones and strategies to avoid and disrupt drone surveillance. They discuss how technology has changed our relationship to our environments, stating:

Our ancestors could tell a lot from looking up at the sky. Spotting and recognizing birds provided crucial information about the weather, where to find food, and if predators were near. In the twenty-first century landscape, knowledge of the natural environment has become our knowledge of technology. Most of us cannot tell the difference between the call of an osprey or a hawk, but we can tell the difference between a Samsung and an iPhone ringtone (A Study into 21st Century Drone Acoustics, Website).⁴⁹

Here, Cardoso and Ruben suggest how consumer technologies

aid, enable, scatter, and fragment our attention from the environments that around us. Other contemporary artists address this theme using a variety of methods and dissemination strategies such as the "Sensory Lab," which builds devices to help humans sense their environment and weather systems.⁵⁰ Gavin Hood's films highlight the potential for drone cameras to capture new perspectives and elevate new knowledge (2016). This is something Thomas Stubblefield describes as the insurgence of drones in civilian culture (Stubblefield, 2020). In Sydney Skybetter's "Dark Elegies: Choreographies of Surveillance and National Defense," he discusses surveillance in public spaces, such as a cleaning robot that monitors and take pictures of spills in supermarkets (Skybetter, 2020). In this way and more, drone, surveillance and other technologies are present and able to extract a myriad of information from various public, private and personal topographies.

Considered another way, Berger argues how images are records of moments captured. This idea is relevant now, more than ever before, because of the advancements and proliferation of consumer grade technologies such as portable cameras, laptops, smartphones, drones, satellites, lasers, spy cams, closed-circuit television (CCTV), GoPro, aviation and weather cameras, algorithmic systems, location apps and editing software, to name a few. As mentioned above, each of these devices can capture, surveil, monitor, record and triangulate the location of a person or group with GPS tracking. This complex undertaking of tracking movement, migration and daily rhythms is nothing novel.

Take, for instance, the idea of social surveillance and other systems of collection and capture.⁵¹ The methods of collection, what happens to this data, and the labour involved in capturing this data is becoming more insidious, and strange. Another example is UCL's *PanoptiCam* project, in which a webcam records the movements of its spectators and broadcasts them live online (UCL, Blog). Or, Marty, a labour replacement robot that maps and monitors grocery store spills in real time. Far from being unintended, Marty is responsible for monitoring and taking photographs of each incident. Once found, Marty photographs the spill, sends

the report to the head office and once a spill is confirmed, Marty sends the grocery staff a message about the spill so that they can clean it up (Skybetter, 2020). Based on this insight, the spill is only a phantom, a trace, a relic, not real, or of any value until it is photographed and affirmed of its importance.⁵² Another absurd example of this invisible drudgery is “Rollbot,” a miniature robot, which delivers replacement toilet paper to bathrooms with the aid of a smartphone app (Dignan, 2020).

Backing up a bit, this interplay between the image, the location and the mediation needs to receive more attention, because it validates the layers of In-Between reality, images, subject, object relations and their location. By this I mean that unseen or unfelt responses may not be unaccounted for, but this does not make them any less real on some level of consciousness. As Lisa Parks describes, drones live beyond the screen and their range is expansive: “from the Earth’s surface, including the geographical layers below and built environment on it, through the domains of the spectrum and the air to the outer limits of orbit” (Parks, 2017, 135-136). And, since there are more than 200 types of drones in 87 nations worldwide, this implies the expansive nature of these technologies to capture visual or auditory layers and systems, which could be masked or obstructed by other frequencies, tones, architecture and bodies (Gehl, 2006).⁵³ In this way, drones offer a “vertical mediation” well beyond its location, cartographies and boundaries and capture potentialities (Parks, 2017). These relations and vantage points offer viewers new engagements with scale, proximity and architectural mapping (made possible by the first aerial photographs taken from hot air balloons, weather balloons and other flying machines).⁵⁴

As the viewer surveils the landscape below with the drone’s eye, this prompts a series of cartographic units, measurements, or photomapping techniques using GPS coordinates to help stabilize the movement.^{55 56} In this sense, images have agency and are mapped, captured, dispersed and sent elsewhere.

The Sky is no longer a passive medium to be acted upon, but rather an agency to be worked through and in concert with...

the still image diagrams a mode of power in which strategic instances of recentralization corral the immanent relations of the network as natural force (Stubblefield, 2020, 72).

Here, Stubblefield is referring to the panoptic discourse, the aftermath of war and how much policing is done in the sky.^{57 58} He further posits how the sky is an active medium and technologies are mobilizing: “the cleavage between land and sky that has historically marked the operations of colonialism and its relations of vertical sovereignty is rendered not only partial but reversible” (Stubblefield, 2020, 72). This vertical privileging brings to light how photographic images from drones become representations of otherness, or photographic gestures, traces and impressions of grids, land and architectural spots. Succinctly put: these images live between screens, air, devices and are often like an invisible all-seeing presence and imply absence.

What I find fascinating here is how information is translated through drones, cameras, sensors, video, screens, and then translated back again into images, lists, pre-programmed maps that show movement, happenings or events that people were aware or unaware of, or already had occurred such as a spill in a grocery store. What is not addressed or discussed here, however, is how personal archives, photo albums, libraries, and more, store data in a way that can be accessible to everyone else. In this sense, creative approaches and other ways of deciphering this data can provide a variety of unique output, perspectives and further opportunity for discovery.

I am interested in the risks and possibilities and how everyday moments are translated through photographic and digital form using a variety of technological methods, as listed above. In a similar vein, these variations indicate the extent to which information is considered, stored and housed in data repositories somewhere. For example, how a viewer or audience of this information becomes implicated or bears witness to a type of spectacle that is somehow an, “aestheticization of everyday life, and the constitution of the narcissistic society of modernity” (Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, 1998, 77-79).⁵⁹ With the aid of technologies, a

shift happens in how researchers view, interact with and disseminate research material with mass and private audiences.

On that note, whether understood as the development of something new or not, I see drone and other photographic data capturing devices as actants that privilege a plethora of invisible and/or immeasurable moments, sometimes over others. Or, what makes data meaningless in some ways, arguably, is that devices collectively record moments. It is worth investigating what information is privileged, what moments are shared or disseminated and translated through other mediums, and what floats to the surface. Tracking the complex exchanges among countless participants in daily motion, this brings to mind the magnitude of

hidden labour that happens unseen in the everyday, in public and private spaces. Collectively, this 24-hour monitoring takes place in the skies, in the water, on the ground, in public spaces, homes, bedrooms, bathrooms, and in the digital confines of the Web.

The next chapter tracks some of these processes and discusses the methodological approaches explored throughout this dissertation, which include 1) *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*; 2) *Research-Creation*; and, 3) *Feminist Materialist Research-Creation*. Each of these methodological strategies were used in combination to create the eight interdisciplinary artworks further discussed in Chapter Four.

INTERLUDE

*Memories of
My Brother Drowning*

When I was seven, we lived on Karindale Road on the west side of Kamloops. I remember it was close to bedtime. My siblings, Trinity, Chandra and I had snuck outside and were playing next to the covered upright pool in the backyard. It was getting cold out. My brother and sister climbed up and onto the ladder above the pool. My brother slid down the slide and fell under the cover and was suddenly trapped and caught under the canopy. I was frozen in horror as I watched him thrash and sink to the bottom of the pool.

I remember seeing my daddy fly across the yard in his clothes and leap into the pool and pull my brother out feet first. He started doing mouth-to-mouth, turned my brother over, and a cascade of water spilled out of my brothers mouth.⁶⁰

CHAPTER 3

Methodological Approaches



Figure 9. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #3, 2020.

THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES the methodological approaches explored throughout this dissertation, which include 1) *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*; 2) *Research-Creation*; and, 3) *Feminist Materialist Research-Creation* (see Fig. 10). Each of the methodological approaches discussed in this chapter relate to the eight interdisciplinary artworks explored in Chapter Four. Each artwork uses a combination of these methods. As a whole the methods that I discuss throughout this dissertation cumulatively contribute to Feminist Materialist Research-Creation because of the unique ways that the artworks were created, presented and exhibited. To demonstrate these ideas, I show process shots, notes, documentation and other ephemera from each of the exhibitions and contextualize this research throughout.

The first methodology, *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*, sits at the intersection of sound and visual studies and foregrounds and re-frames everyday interactions, cultural practice and expressive ways of understanding the world through acoustic and photographic documentation and other mediated experiences. This includes discussions on the importance of visual and sonic approaches to research, and how everyday photography and other multisensory capturing devices have enabled the proliferation of media representations in popular cultural discourse.

The second approach I discuss is *Research-Creation*—a scholarly and artistic research strategy that explores speculative, embodied, experimental, future-focused and interdisciplinary approaches to creative process and practice (Loveless, 2019; Manning and Massumi, 2015). To conclude this section, I include the third approach, *Feminist Materialist Research-Creation*, which presents a hybrid methodology that blends together visual, sonic

auto-ethnographic and Research-Creation approaches and strategies for creative production and dissemination. This propositional research approach is subjective, contextual and employs a blend of strategies that challenge modes of spectatorship—“not just with words, but in space, with technologies, and through bodies” (Mondloch, 2018, 6).

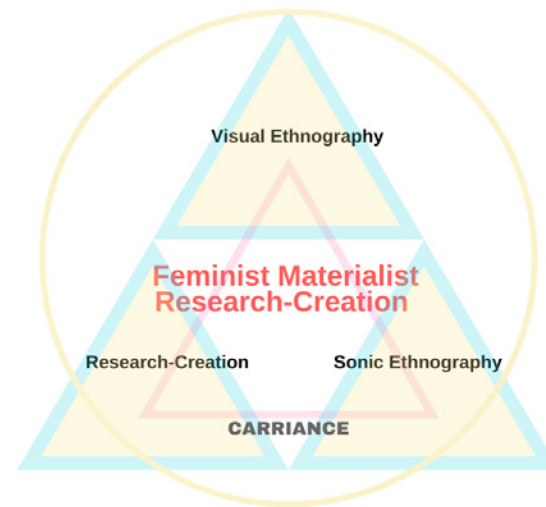


Figure 10. *prOphesy sun*. This diagram outlines the four methodological approaches used throughout this dissertation: *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*; *Research-Creation*; a methodology for *Feminist Materialist Research-Creation* and, *Carriance*.

3.1 *Visual and Sonic Ethnography*

This section discusses how contemporary artists and scholars use ethnographic methods to capture visual and interdisciplinary expressions that convey aspects from everyday experiences. Particular focus is on the cultural practice of everyday photography and how other multisensory consumer-grade, portable technologies have enabled the proliferation of visual and sonic media representations in popular urban discourse. Take, for instance,

social media sites such as Soundcloud, Bandcamp, YouTube, Vimeo, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, to name a few, which provide platforms for multimodal sharing and dissemination of sound compositions, personal stories, events, and other everyday cultural productions.

Contemporary creatives build on these notions and emphasize “experience-near” approaches that value and incorporate hybrid, blended research methods that account for visual and interdisciplinary expressions that convey aspects from everyday experiences (Collins and Gallinat, 2010). And, contrary to what Clifford (1986), Denzin (1997), and Neumann (1996) argue, as ethnographic approaches lacking subjective insight and distance from a situation, artists challenge these notions, bringing the view up close, into the selfie-sphere.⁶¹

For some, visual and sonic moments capture the atmosphere of a place, the smallest details, something being or feeling like, “minor-key variations of reality,” or, photographic images that intrinsically link to action, thought, and knowledge production (Monnet, 2014; Conord and Cuny, 2014). Creswell and Muncey describe this method as portraying multiple layers of consciousness, where the self in research is implicated: “The vulnerable self, the coherent self, critiquing the self in social contexts, the subversion of dominant discourses, and the evocative potential,” that it incurs (Creswell, 2018). For others, images communicate about our cultural and our lived experiences and should be accumulated and exploited, as they hold fragmented gateways to emotion and other personal stories (Edwards, 1997, 58).

Sonic ethnography refers to a qualitative research approach to audio recordings, sound art, sound walks, interviews, and other sonic materials and our experiences (Droumeva, 2016). Steven Feld describes ethnography as ethnomusicology, a growing field of study in which the researchers intrinsically have a material, cultural, analytic and creative relationship with sound (Feld and Brennis, 2004). In this way, sound studies open up potentialities for a deeper understanding of our everyday ecological environment (Drever, 2002).

Traditionally, auto-ethnography is defined as a qualitative research approach that uses self-reflection and writing to explore personal experience alongside other cultural, social contexts (Creswell, 2018, 73). In 1956, David Hayano first coined the term to mean a style of critiquing by anthropologists that investigates power structures and incorporates self-representations (Reed-Danahay and Panourgia, 2000).

For Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner, auto-ethnography is more radical than that, being both a process and a product, or a writing strategy that “displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis et al., 2011, 273-74; Ellis and Bochner, 2000, 739-740). They propose evocative auto-ethnography, as a genre in which, “the emotional and embodied experiences of the researcher are drawn upon to allow for a clearer understanding of particular life experience to emerge” (McCormack, 2012). Carolyn Ellis offers a layered, narrative and personal approach, which, she argues, brings the audience closer to the experience. Similarly, J. Telles states:

In effect, we make ourselves, rather than the Other, vulnerable; we reveal ourselves in the text as a narrative character, not as an act of hubris but as a necessary methodological device to move us toward a newer understanding of reality, ourselves, and truths (Telles, 2000, 6-7).

Here Telles suggests that by using auto-ethnographic approaches we reveal personal, reflexive representations of reality and help form multiple understandings of life, opinions and stories. Clifford, Denzin and Neumann argue that ethnographic approaches lack subjective insight, as they situate the reality of the writer as the observer. By this they mean that the observer has no distance from the situation they are describing (Clifford, 1986; Denzin, 1997; Neumann, 1996).

What this literature reveals is the power of personal experiences and how they help us to understand images, texts, and sounds, in particular, how one needs to consider all of the various processes involved—the movement, social encounters, environment and

context leading up to the event. The next section builds on these ideas and examines the literature on Research-Creation. The goal here is to present a diverse experimental framework for creative production and dissemination that supports individual and collaborative creative practices.

3.2 Research-Creation

Artworking is sensing a potential co-emergence and co-fading and bringing into being objects or events, processes or encounters that sustain these metamorphoses and further transmit their effect (Ettinger, 2005, 710-711).⁶²

In the above passage, theorist Bracha Ettinger describes the process of artworking as a form of co emergence that brings things into being. This is interesting lens to frame the importance of creative dissemination, in particular, because contemporary artists, scholars, and theorists are continually exploring what artistic research is and how to define, categorize and frame it. I see creative practice and scholarly output as a creative opportunity to share materials across a wide set of disciplines. This section discusses these ideas and examines the fundamental ways that Research-Creation is understood across funding models, artistic steams, and presents the variety of alternative sub-categorizations, modalities and how it contributes to creative knowledge production and dissemination.

As a starting point, in academia and across funding platforms, artistic research is regularly framed as Research-Creation in Canada, *Practice as Research* in Australia and Britain, and *Arts-Based Research* in the US (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2015). Research-Creation is most commonly understood as a combination of research, art, and theory on Canadian institutional sites that fund social sciences and humanities research (Canada Council, SSHRC, Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FQRSC) etc.).

In scholarly circles, Research-Creation has been gaining traction as a way to convey artistic and interdisciplinary contributions in

the humanities. As Natalie Loveless argues, Research-Creation can be considered as “both a means to produce innovative scholarship and a way to transform pedagogy and research within the contemporary neoliberal university” (Loveless, 2019, 29). Loveless states:

[R]esearch-creation, at its most interesting, emerges when the modes of interdisciplinarity that have become common to the early twenty-first-century university (the bringing together of different methodological literacies that illuminate new ways of thinking and doing relevant to a pressing problem but that results in a single species of output, for example, a book) shift to allow for the bringing together not only of different methodological literacies but of different species of output (a book and a video or an essay and a performance) that, while dissonant in terms of their language, are understood to have equally weighted value as objects of knowledge production and impact within university communities and their assessment rubrics” (Loveless, 2019, 30).

Here Loveless illuminates the ways that research has weighted value in academia and across funding models. In particular, how artistic output or material contributions often get overlooked in this scale system. This distinction is important to note, as Research-Creation output is not always a book or paper, but, more often an object or performance which is harder to quantify. Further, standard models do not entirely account for emergent research that presents new aesthetic approaches or speculative ways of considering sound design and interdisciplinary research.

For Sarah E. Truman and Stephanie Springgay, Research-Creation is a generative form of academic dissemination, where thinking and making intersect. Influenced by Fluxus traditions (making event scores), improvisation, and Massumi and Manning’s notions on Research-Creation, they create propositions for their research process (Truman and Springgay, 2018, 2-3). They suggest that Research-Creation is, “attuned to process rather than the communication of outputs or products” (Pedagogical Impulse,

Website). And, creative processes can be further separated into six sub-frameworks or propositions:

- 1. Speculate:** Research-Creation is future event-oriented. As a speculative practice, it invents techniques of relation;
- 2. Propose enabling constraints:** Enabling constraints are expansive and suggestive. They operate by delimiting process and possibility, although they always include more possibilities than any given event realizes (Pedagogical Impulse, Website);
- 3. Create problems:** Research-Creation is a practice that does not seek to describe, explain, or solve problems. Rather, it is an “event” that creates concepts that problematize. Concepts are not pre-given or known in advance. As an event of problems, Research-Creation brings something new into the world (Pedagogical Impulse, Website);
- 4. Think-in-movement:** The aim of Research-Creation is not to reflect on something that has passed. Thinking-in-movement is to think in the act; it is a thinking saturated with rhythm and affect (Pedagogical Impulse, Website);
- 5. Note emergences — rework emergences:** Concepts proliferate in Research-Creation, and with them, ethico-political concerns emerge. Once an ethico-political concern emerges, re-work it to see what it can do (Pedagogical Impulse, Website); and,
- 6. More-than-represent:** Rather than attempting to “represent” or report on Research-Creation, use them to propel further thought, and create something new: new concepts, new ethico-political concerns, new problems (Pedagogical Impulse, Website).

Truman and Springgay’s six sub-frameworks provide a compelling clarification on the generative potential of Research-Creation. Indeed, they suggest how propositions are different from research methods or research design in that they are speculative and event-oriented (Truman and Springgay, 2016). Interestingly,

these are not set out as directions nor rules that contain and control movement. In this way, the propositional scores emphasize chance and improvisation.

Throughout the literature, other sub-categorizations emerge to link how research and creation connects *within* academic practices (Manning, 2014; Manning and Massumi, 2014; Rodgers, 2012). For example, Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk describe Research-Creation as a methodology tied to the art of living movement and outline how creative presentations can offer a type of knowledge mobility and creative dissemination that provides a unique output (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012; 2015). According to Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson, artistic research is the subject, the method, the context and the outcome of the research (Biggs and Karlsson, 2010, 46). While Erin Manning and Brian Massumi posit that it is a speculative, embodied, experimental and future-focused process with much potential for *thinking-with and-across* creative practice (Manning and Massumi, 2015). Or, simply put, encompassing multidisciplinary, hybrid forms of artistic practice, social science, and artistic research (Truman and Springgay, 2015). This last point is further exemplified in the eight creative expressions showcased in Chapter Four.

For Christopher Frayling, artistic research is practice-based research, and useful and an integral form of research (Frayling, 1993). Frayling’s ideas here take three forms:

1) Research *through* practice: as the act of creating something. For example, someone painting a portrait; 2) Research *for* practice: the creation or artifact being more important than the research; and, 3) Research *into* practice: as what can be organized through studying others practices or processes. For example, someone studying the life of an artist. Frayling’s seminal ideas validate practice as an integral part of research. The three definitions are also useful as they break down the creative process, allowing other areas of development to be recognized, such as explorative, documentary and reflective practices. However, many artists and scholars argue that the term Research-Creation is more nuanced, complex and needs further clarification, and inclusion to address

the role of the subject in research.

Another way to approach Research-Creation is to consider emergent categories and frameworks that provide space for a variety of expressions and other forms of creative experimentation that often do not fit into pre-ordained categories of Research-Creation (see, for example, the SSHRC and The Fonds websites).⁶³ Within the Research-Creation literature, notable sub-terms include Family Resemblances (Manning and Massumi, 2014), and Materialist Research-Creation (Manning, 2014). Sub-modalities include: Research-for-Creation, Research-from-Creation, Creative Presentations of Research, and Creation-as-Research (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012); and sub-frameworks include: Speculate, Propose enabling constraints, Create problems, Think-in-movement, Note emergences—Rework emergences, and More-than-represent (Truman and Springgay, 2015; 2016); or an emergent “seed bank:” that includes: Practice immanent critique, Invent techniques of relation, Design enabling constraints, Enable pop-up propositions (Manning and Massumi, web).

According to Erin Manning and Brian Massumi, Research-Creation is more of a speculative, embodied, experimental and future-focused process, with, “the potential for thinking-with and-across techniques of creative practice” (Manning and Massumi, 2015). Or, a practice that moves, “toward catalyzing an event of emergence” (Manning and Massumi, 2015). They create a set of propositions or strategies as a way to re-conceptualize the term Research-Creation, so that it gives space for emergent processes. They break down the categories as the following:

7. Practice immanent critique: “It is an activity of immanent critique, an act that only knows the conditions of its existence from within its own process, an act that refuses to judge from without. Research-Creation is a pragmatically speculative practice that, while absolutely entrenched in its own process of making-time, here, now, remains untimely. It is pragmatic in the sense that it is concerned with the singularity of how this practice does its work under these conditions. It is speculative in the sense that its untimely differential makes

operative an opening for experience to unfold its future. It invents problems that have no home, no reference yet” (Toward a Process Seed Bank, 2015).

8. Invent techniques of relation: “Techniques of relation seek to find modalities of experimentation that connect practices at the levels of their intensive creative force. This is done not in order to map them onto one another, or to evaluate one in terms of another, but to propose a co-causal thirdness of exploration that can be generative of new modes of practice and inquiry” (Toward a Process Seed Bank, 2015).

9. Design enabling constraints: “An enabling constraint is constraining to the extent that its focus is to structure the field of improvisation and enabling in the sense that the constraint is potentializing. The idea of enabling constraint aims to avoid the voluntaristic connotations often carried by words like “emergence” and “invention” when allied to a concept of improvisation that suggests absolute open-endedness. Improvisation is key but structured through rigorous experimentation with the creation of conditions generative of emergent process” (Toward a Process Seed Bank, 2015).

10. Enable pop-up propositions: “Pop-up propositions are one way to facilitate the emergence of singular points of inflection. Research-Creation requires openings for the making-collective of emergent problems. Problems are here understood in the most creative sense: openings to the texturing of the event-conditioning at the heart of Research-Creation. A pop-up proposition is a cut in the event that gathers momentum around itself, offering a slight intensification, or a full change of direction. What makes it a point of inflection is its capacity, in the event, to change the direction of what is unfolding” (Toward a Process Seed Bank, 2015).

Manning and Massumi further state:

These techniques would have to be of two kinds: techniques to set in place propitious initial conditions and techniques to modulate the event as it moves through its phases. The

paradigm is one of conditioning, rather than framing. The difference is that conditioning consists in bringing co-causes into interaction. The reference is to complex emergent process, rather than programmed organization. Programmed organization functions predictably in a bounded frame and lends itself to reproduction. Emergent process, dedicated to the singular occurrence of the new, agitates inventively in an open field, creating the conditions for the event to become more than the sum of its parts (Manning and Massumi, Web).

Here Manning and Massumi discuss how emergent ideas can become opportunities. Or, what they describe as an, “emergent creativity” (Manning and Massumi, Web). Manning and Massumi further state:

Research-Creation is not about overlaying one with the other (finding concepts, for instance, that explain the artistic process), but for making felt the event of their uneasy co-habitation. This co-habitation does not involve giving words to art any more than it involves making philosophy (or politics) artistic. The politics of Research-Creation are precisely the practice of creating the conditions for their differential to be felt (Manning and Massumi, Web).

Erin Manning takes this further, arguing how current funding models only accept works that account for an, “experience that separates out the human subject from the ecologies of encounter” (Manning, 2014, 3). These ideas speak to the claim to knowledge and role of the subject in research. Manning also describes the sub-term Materialist Research-Creation, as an emergent direction that offers alternative frameworks in defiance of accepted qualitative methods (Springgay, and Zaliwska, 2015). Her sub-term includes drawings and sketches as valid research outputs (Manning, 2014, 3-4).

For Chapman and Sawchuk, the sub-term *family resemblance* provides a useful way to further define Research-Creation, to help connect, compare or find similarities between methods and

various projects, approaches, lexicons and strategies (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012; Wittgenstein, 2010). They outline the four modalities as: 1) Research-for-creation: a collection of practices, technologies, materials, and theoretical frameworks, collaborations, iteratively occurring throughout the projects process; 2) Research-from-creation: as the ethnographic, methodological, theoretical information, and insights gathered from creative processes and then used or looped back into the project; 3) Creative presentations of research: a “reference to alternative forms of research dissemination and knowledge mobility linked to such projects” (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012, 49); and, 4) Creation-as-research: engaging with the ontological question of what constitutes as research in order to make space for creative material and process-focused research-outcomes” (Chapman and Sawchuk, 2012, 49). As I have discussed earlier in this section, each of these sub-terms offer us a comparative way to consider Research-Creation across the literature.

These frameworks provide opportunities for creative knowledge mobility. Tara Rodgers describes this approach as technology historians embracing models that accept failed ideas and artifacts as research, and how these notions can create unique progressive opportunities. Indeed, Rodgers stipulates that scholarly research is often linear in approach, while creative research is more multidirectional, collectively shaped and/or created in collaborative ways that include ideas, failures. Important here is what she deems “socially-situated turning points” that can inform the trajectory of any project (Rodgers, 2012, 155). Whereby, meaningful failures can often lead to new perspectives, which provide, in turn, new work. Rodgers stipulates that it is in the “patterns and knots in research and creative work” where ideas blend and become something more (Rodgers, 2012, 155). These notions speak to the generative nature of artmaking, where the boundary of where a project ends is a blurred space that becomes the beginning place of another.

Carole Gray and Julian Malins define these blurred spaces of trial and error as critical practice-based research spaces, where art

and design approaches mesh with scientific research processes, which value action, experimentation and reflection as potential spaces for discovering new methods. They also refer to the value of using sketchbooks for any medium, as they offer a context to record and store visual ideas, data, and information (Gray and Malins, 2016). John Law argues about the difficulties of creative practices, stating:

The challenge is not to take the improvisatory and uncertain quality of research as a methodological failure, but as an inspiration to think about method more inclusively by considering all modes of relating to the world as potentially suitable methods. Research entails finding new ways of engaging with daily life as it unfolds, whether these are verbal, pictorial, gestural, or affective. This realisation invites us to direct more attention to 'method-in-practice' (Law 2004, 45-46).

Bracha L. Ettinger argues that the act of artworking is subjective and a linking experience, stating:

Artworking enacts what are otherwise impossible relations and virtual occurrences, and realises the passage, onto the screen of vision, of psychic traces from what would be otherwise foreclosed from human consciousness...Kernel to kernel, inside to inside transconnects (Ettinger, 2015, p. 31-32).

The above text presents a diverse approach and framework for Research-Creation artmaking. Whether understood as the development of something new or as a form of institutional acceptance, it therefore could be argued that every artistic encounter cultivates a unique, creative output. In this sense, I see Research-Creation as a complex framework that presents a variety of experimental, creatively focused approaches to artistic dissemination in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The following section builds on this rich literature and presents a methodology for Feminist Materialist Research-Creation that embraces experimental, creatively focused approaches to individual and collaborative artistic dissemination in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

3.3 Methodology for Feminist Materialist Research-Creation

This section proposes a methodology for Feminist Materialist Research-Creation which combines personal experience with aspects and components from the existing literature. Following a rich lineage of Feminist text and artistic production, in particular, Feminist Manifesto's that challenge societal notions on gender, race, environment or other poignant issues, this methodology expands our understanding of feminism, creative practice and research. The following outlines the framework and discusses the importance of exploratory models of creative practice and alternative methods of inquiry.

As I mentioned in the last section, standard models do not entirely account for emergent research that presents new interdisciplinary practices, frameworks, strategies, propositions, or speculative ways of considering motherhood, matter, bodies, and perception. This dissertation adds to this nascent field by celebrating various propositional forms of knowledge formation, data collection, emergent creativity and dissemination. To be clear, I define data as various forms of analogue and digital materials, notes, conversations, photographs, emails, ephemera, encounters, experiences, sounds collages, etc.

This dissertation expands on Truman and Springgay's exploratory propositions and Springgay, Zaliwska and Manning's Materialist Research-Creation sensibilities to link improvisation, feminist discourse, and existing categories of Research-Creation together (Manning, 2014). This approach is particularly important as the eight interdisciplinary artworks presented in Chapter Four link each of these sensibilities together.

Specifically, auto-ethnography aligns with this research project, as qualitative studies are traditionally written and recorded by an individual who is also the project's subject matter (Ellis, 2004; Muncey, 2014). Creswell and Muncey describe this method as portraying multiple layers of consciousness, where the self in research is implicated: "The vulnerable self, the coherent self, critiquing the

self in social contexts, the subversion of dominant discourses, and the evocative potential” that it incurs (Creswell, 2018).

I foreground a portfolio of eight projects that present the female body, vibrant objects, moving imagery, motion capture data, sonic fictions and other ontological geographies of relations in urban, and industrial landscapes. This approach combines layered iterative accounts of the artworks and the resulting experiences, which are outlined in the following text. They also highlight various forms of dissemination, media, publications and exhibitions to illustrate a spectrum of methods and potentialities on how bodies become meaningful. In this sense, cinematic visualizations and sonic compositions are inherent to auto-ethnographic and Research-Creation practices, because they are used as evocative tools to inform and align post-modernist feminist and materialist sensibilities together.

This propositional research approach is subjective, contextual and employs a blend of strategies that challenge modes of spectatorship—“not just with words, but in space, with technologies, and through bodies” (Mondloch, 2018, 6). In particular, this emerging methodology brings awareness into the contested spaces where bodies and materiality inhabit and transform ideology discourses to include life and lived experience (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008).

This approach also takes inspiration from feminist text such as Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s *1969 Manifesto on Maintenance Acts*, Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki’s *Manifesto 1979*, Lena Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee’s *2016 Manifesto for Maternal Performance (Art)* and Natalie Loveless’ *2019 Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Ukeles, 1969; Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki, 1979; Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee, 2016; Loveless, 2019). Collectively, they disrupt notions on gender roles, power dynamics, the everyday, and institutional or societal expectations of artistic research. In particular, this methodology takes up Lena Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee’s call to supportive and collaborative practice, stating:

We will write for forty days. Forty days to mirror the forty-week

gestation period during which a human mother carries her child. We are pregnant with political and performance possibilities. We have decided to write alongside our making—our Manifesto will be born of practice. Our co-writing will be separated over geographic and temporal space, Liverpool and Cardiff, email, Skype and phone conversations with only occasional meetings in Birmingham, in a real-time and physical location. Yet, our writing will constantly be in response to, and developed and supported by, the absent other. We will be in relation (Šimic and Underwood-Lee, 2017, 131).

Here Šimic and Underwood-Lee pay tribute to Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s *1969 Manifesto on Maintenance Acts*. However, what I find pertinent is the consideration for everyday action, spatial and temporal notions of time and collaboration (Ukeles, 1969; Šimic and Underwood-Lee, 2016). This manifesto for maternal considerations aligns with Feminist Materialist Research-Creation practices because it positions collaborative creative practice at the heart of the methodology.

This methodology argues for the inclusion of preparatory documentation as an integral aspect of the research process. Throughout this document, I include ephemera that showcase different aspects of care and *Carriance*—holding, lifting up and supporting and presenting invisible aspects of the research process. This is important because curators, artists, designers, scholars, colleagues, partners, children and materials have helped shape, guide, reinforce, encourage, aid, advocate and move each aspect of this research forward.

Carriance also aligns with notions of copoiesis and subjectivity (Ettinger, 2014). Ricarda Barbara Bouncken, Robin Pesch, and Andreas Reuschl articulate copoiesis as a strategy of knowledge transfer and knowledge creation (Bouncken et al, 2016). They state:

Knowledge transfer and knowledge creation occur within firms but as well among firms and thus in an environment of social interaction, rules, and resources of the firms but also of

rules and resources developed within the inter-organizational arena of alliances. The rules strongly influence the couplings, exchanges, and creative processes among firms (Bouncken et al, 2016, 45).

These ideas of knowledge transfer, exchanges, and creation align with the concept of Carriance, and collaboration. I believe that preparatory documentation, exhibition catalogues, lists, posters, maps, primary sources, production components and other art related artefacts are key resources developed within and through inter-organizational structures and alliances (Bouncken et al, 2016, 45). These exchanges serve as reminders or witnesses to the many unseen collaborative efforts that transpire over email, phone or other means—both within and outside institutional and conventional structures.

This proposed methodology showcases documents such as artistic notes, interviews, process shots, exhibition calls and scores as important forms of evidence contributing to the creation of knowledge through artistic practices. Supporting the claim about preparatory moments as foundational to creative practice, I suggest that this approach foregrounds the methodological processes, the building blocks, skin, or the stitching that hold garments together. Planning documents, while often unseen by members of the audience, help shape performances and the collaborations between artists, objects, sounds, and spaces. Their importance is further highlighted through the photographic documentation. Documentation considered this way, can span many

medias, digital, analogue or material forms. It can be tossed, erased, or, alternatively, it can be archived. Yet, I see preparatory items as essential because they are the air that makes the research breathe and bring many creations to life. Moreover, they are vital, messy, banal, full of aesthetically unruly and forgettable sightlines. In particular, situated within this framework, process documentation are vital contributions to research because they contextualize an artist's positionality, and acknowledge the levels of care, vetting, mobilization, production, reciprocity and material considerations that were in place and span beyond human and non-human binaries.


Specifically, I see this contemporaneous and collaborative, making-thinking-doing space as a potent field of possibility—where new propositions, materialist sensibilities, and alternative methods of inquiry can co-emerge and validate the In-between, threshold moments of everyday performance.

The next chapter introduces the eight interdisciplinary artworks that demonstrate a Feminist Materialist Research-Creation approach to creative and collaborative practice. As mentioned above, the artworks embrace feminist strategies of collaborative and improvisational methods of research and utilize smartphone, drone, motion capture, surveillance and other technological apparatus and devices in the process of creative making. Each of the artworks draw from personal narratives of being an artist, mother, emerging scholar, ecofeminist and grieving daughter.

A photograph of a railroad crossing in a rural, wooded area. In the foreground on the left, a wooden post holds a red octagonal stop sign with the word "STOP" in white. Above it are two white rectangular signs with red borders, angled towards the tracks. The tracks run horizontally across the middle of the frame, with gravel bedding. Two people are walking on the tracks: one in dark clothing closer to the stop sign, and another in a purple shirt further down. The background is a dense forest of green trees under a slightly overcast sky.

INTERLUDE

*Creative Practice
in the Early Years*



When I was six, we lived at 999 Stardust Street in Kamloops. I was obsessed with building landscapes that connected to other parts. This desire manifested itself in many forms and structures that mostly lived throughout our home. Some forms were built, taken down, rebuilt, erected again and hastily forgotten until they needed to be removed, while other forms were vocal, or movement based. Each creation was different in approach, form, colour, texture, and feel. Typically, the installations consisted of found materials such as wood scraps, paper, strings, discarded pizza boxes, fabric, and other odd assorted items. And vocal forms became melodies sung in the bathtub, riding my bike, or while making other forms. Sometimes, unannounced to my parents, I would flip furniture upside down and string boards across the tops of chairs, couches, door frames—between rooms and drape fabric to hide the light sources. Other times, when my parents were out, I would dig holes in the garden and place sheets of wood on top to carry the load of the dirt and plants above. I would then crawl inside and hide from my siblings or encourage them to hide with me.

CHAPTER 4

*An Iterative Account
of the Development of a
Feminist Materialist
Research-Creation Practice*



Figure 11. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #4, 2020.

THIS CHAPTER PRESENTS eight interdisciplinary Research-Creation works that were individually and collaboratively created and produced between 2016–2019. The eight expressions include: *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017), *Hunting Self* (2017), *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019), *Floating in the In-Between* (2019), *Carrying Others* (2019), and *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019). Cumulatively, these projects allow us to investigate the complexities, process and nuances of the development of a Feminist Materialist approach to Research-Creation practice.

Collectively, the eight artworks demonstrate various aspects of *Carriance* through feminist explorations between bodies, technologies, and matter. Inspired by Bellacasa’s notions on care as relational and something that is “distributed across a multiplicity of agencies and materials” (Bellacasa, 2017, 20), and Manning and Massumi’s ideas on creative techniques being springboards for activating and setting practices in motion, this research considers the connections between the art forms and explores how Research-Creation methods can be used as feminist strategies to draw out the entanglements—“between bodies, in space, with technologies” (Manning and Massumi, 2015; Mondloch, 2018, 14). The goal here is to illustrate *Carriance* through the linkages, the patterns, and to examine how feminist praxis can be used as a way to unite human and non-human forms. By this I mean that through the exchange or process of artmaking, bodies and technologies can form new experiences and ways of engagement and opens up the term *Carriance* to show how it can be more than one method, form or approach with much potential to challenge, encourage and elicit embodied ways of knowing.

This chapter presents ephemera alongside the final artworks to showcase moments of *Carriance* and highlight how important the invisible aspects of the research are to the overall process. I include this ephemera here because curators, artists, designers, scholars, friends, partners, colleagues and materials have mobilized, vetted, produced and carried this research forward. I also want to draw attention to the multiplicity of ways of that *Carriance* can emote and advocate for other bodies, structures and relationships—from body to body, structure to structure, relationship to relationship. Further, I include documentation and other ephemera because it is linked to events, actions, movements, objects, animals, bacteria or people. In this way, it shares the same ancestor, relative and is part of a larger family unit. Whether small or large, each of these process moments are evidence, and part of the whole. Wrapped in traces, imbuing parts of the whole. In this sense, minutia, no matter the size or medium, is part of the process and shows aspects of *Carriance*. Thus, documentation should be included and considered equally as a part of the fundamental quilt or composition.

These projects take up the theoretical orientations of 1) *Feminist Materialism*—a fluid, research practice strategy that makes visible bodies, matter and space (Mondloch, 2018); 2) *The Optical Unconscious*—what lies beyond the cinematic and photographic frame (Benjamin, 2010); and 3) *The Technological Unconscious*—materiality, information systems, computational processes, and the blurry borderline of perception (Thrift, 2004).

Complementing and advancing these ideas are eight subthemes, which correspond to the interludes. The interludes tell stories, introduce and foreshadow aspects of *Carriance* and relate to the subthemes which consist of the following: 1) *Levity—Flight*; 2) *Domestic Labour*—unpaid work in the home (Huws, 2019); 3) *Dreams*—sensations, images, ideas and emotions that occur during sleep; 4) *Thinking-Making-Doing*—thoughts, action and the reaction of that thought; 5) *Self and Other*—how we relate to another person, animal or thing; 6) *Breath*—the movement between body and environment and a process which air moves

in and out of the body; 7) Bodies and Extraction—the mixing of human and non-human forms and technologies; and, 8) Nostalgia—a seminal yearning for a past moment or happier memory.

Alongside each artwork, I also present a reflection, which is necessary as a method to connect back to the main theoretical approaches. In this sense, the interludes and reflections work in tandem to construct and demonstrate alternative ways of approaching the overarching theme of Carriance, the central ideas, themes and methodological and theoretical ideas explored in the thesis.

It is important to note that each of the eight artworks included

in the following pages was also selected, exhibited and/or performed in local, national and international galleries, festivals or conferences, including: the Unit/Pitt Gallery (2016) in Vancouver BC, Fazakas Gallery (2017) in Vancouver, DIY@DIV (Dance in Vancouver) (2017) at Gold Saucer studios in Vancouver, +15 Soundscape Gallery in the Arts Commons (2018-19) in Calgary Alberta, Oxygen Art Centre (2019) in Nelson BC, School of Interactive Arts + Technology (2016), 12 ACM Conference on Creativity & Cognition at UC San Diego Qualcomm Institute (2019), the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment at UC Davis (2019), Theatre & Performance Research Association (TaPRA) Conference at the University of Exeter (2019), and the Intersection Digital Studios at Emily Carr University of Art + Design (2016).

INTERLUDE

Traces



The first signs of early labour with Owl were exciting as there was so many unknowns and much anticipation. I remember sitting on a large inflated ball in our living room tracing out shapes, combining circles and triangles together for an assignment. Every so often I felt a kick, and a woozy pain fill my lower abdomen. That uncomfortable feeling grew over the next few hours until I fell asleep. Around 5 am my cervical mucus plug fell out. Soft pain began to build in lingering and cascading waves. These bursts lasted for minutes and faded, and then surfaced as mountains that propelled us both forward. At the 26-hour mark things intensified and I knew that my first glimpse of motherhood was imminently close.



Figure 12. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #5, 2020.

4.1 *Traces of Motherhood*

Medium 3-channel A/V installation

Locations Motion Capture Studios at Emily Carr University of Art + Design; School of Interactive Arts + Technology, Campus Stairwell; Unit/Pitt Gallery, Vancouver BC

Materials Weather balloon, mocap suit, wooden box, speakers, projectors, tape, smartphone, tripod, 2 monitors and speakers

Motion Capture Richard Overington

Visualizations Omid Alemi and prOphecy sun

Photography Reese Muntean, Kate Hennessy, prOphecy sun, and Darren Fleet

Poster Kate Hennessy

Exhibition Statement Gabriel Saloman

Link <https://prophecysun.com/Traces-of-Motherhood>



This section discusses the three-channel audio and video artwork *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), which was shown in two alternative exhibition formats. The first iteration of the installation was shown in a graduate seminar exhibition, *Computational Poetics*, at the SFU Surrey Campus in April 2016 (see Fig. 14–16). The second format was in a group exhibition, *Art & Parenthood*, with artists Mark DeLong, Dream the Combine, MF Rattray and Eloise Williams Rattray and Skeena Reece.

This work takes up all three theoretical orientations, which include *Feminist Materialism*, the *Optical Unconscious*, and the *Technological Unconscious* through explorations of material, immaterial and immersive perspectives. This research also takes up the subtheme, Levity—Flight, and the multitude of ways one can fly or move through space whilst on the ground. I foreground emergent optical and filmic processes, images, infant motion capture data, alongside domestic and maternal perspectives and actions. Each of these orientations enable unique ways of viewing and considering how maternal memories are captured and explored in public and institutional spaces.

The following pages present the artwork and evidence of Carriance through text and digital ephemera, which includes exhibition shots, curatorial statements, the exhibition call, submission text, posters, motion capture process shots and other documentation, and video stills.

Previous page: Figure 13. prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Video Still.

4.1.1 Exhibition Documentation: April 8, 2016



Figure 14. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood*, 2016. Installation view of Projection 1. Photo courtesy of Reese Muntean.

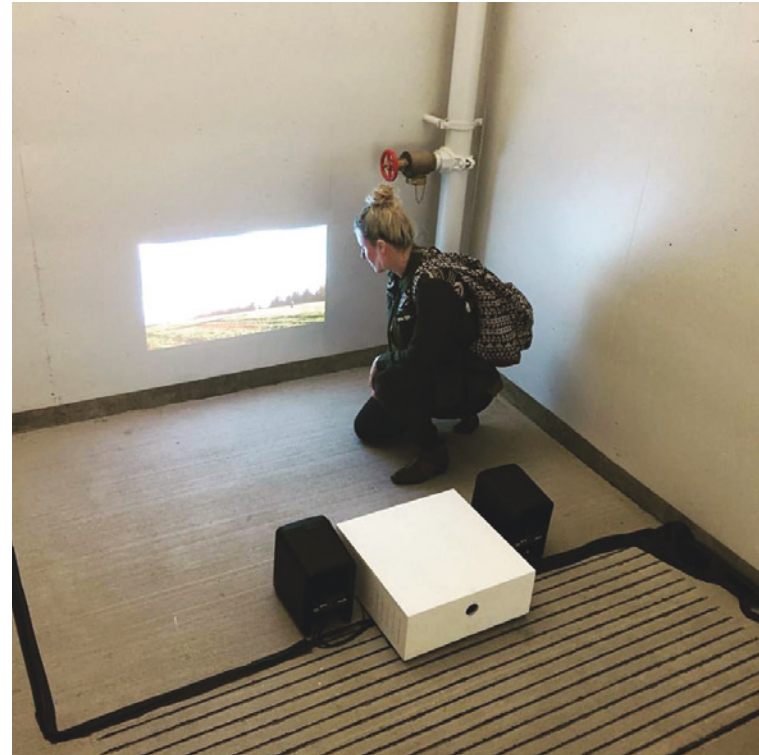


Figure 15. prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Installation view of Projection 2 and 3. Photo courtesy of Kate Hennessy.



Figure 16. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016*. Installation view of Projection 2 and 3. Photo courtesy of Reese Muntean.

4.1.2 Unit/Pitt Gallery Exhibition Documentation: April 30, 2016



Figure 17. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Installation view.*



Figure 18. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Installation view.*



Figure 19. prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Video Still 1.



Figure 20. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood*, 2016. Video Still 2.



Figure 21. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Video Still 3.*

4.1.3 Reflection

One of the main objectives of performance art, at least in its emergence and manifestation in Western art history, is related closely to the innovative idea of creating objectless art that cannot be collected, exhibited, or interrogated in any other way into the economic and aesthetic norms of the commodified art establishment. (Foerschner and Rivenc, 2018, 180).

In the above quote, Foerschner and Rivenc articulate the founding definition of performance art as something that cannot be collected or interrogated in any other way (Foerschner and Rivenc, 2018, 180). However, as they further surmise, performances are more than the performance itself. In part because the feelings, actions and ephemera live on beyond the initial act—beyond the Happening, script, event, or score. In this sense, even though meaning is produced when a performer enacts something live in front of an audience, it lives beyond the initial motion, sound and form. By this I mean that the starting structure, note, image, performance score is only that, one temporal moment. However, the performance lives beyond that nominal moment through documentation, experience, sound recordings, video, and other digital or material archival ways that transform that initial form or structure into something else. In this way, performances leave traces behind, that extend, breathe, suspend and invigorate new ways of engagement, seeing, feeling and being with the material in other realms. I argue that each of these moments can also be seen as evidence of Carriance, and acknowledge the unseen labour, care work, time, and multiple ways that a performance has been supported or carried by others.

J.L. Austin writes on performative utterances as being like gestures, acts, producing something beyond reality that can

be witnessed by others (Austin, 1962, 14-16). Using this definition as a starting point, the following pages reflect on *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), a three-channel audio and video artwork and discuss how the work was constituted, carried out and documented. In particular, this section focuses on a series of care acts and gestures that highlight the integral and relational aspects of collaboration such as motion capture shots of my daughter Owl, data visualizations, sonic compositions and show posters which were used to support the presentation of the final works. Each of these digital photographic or sonic ephemera are made visible and highlight integral parts of the overall story and research process. To begin, I outline how this Research-Creation project was conceived, discuss the ways the artwork was disseminated and how it demonstrates a Feminist Materialist approach to Research-Creation.

Baby Owl Project

In 2013, I started a longitudinal motion capture study of my daughter, Owl, called the *Baby Owl Project* for the *Moving Stories: Digital Tools for Movement Meaning and Interaction* research project (Moving Stories). This interdisciplinary, collaborative research partnership focused on designing digital tools for movement, meaning & interaction over a five-year timeframe (Schiphorst and Pasquier, 2015) (see Fig. 22-24).

As a research project, *Moving Stories* included international and local partnerships with the University of Illinois' eDream Center (Emerging Digital Research and Education in Arts Media Research), Emily Carr University of Art and Design

(ECUAD), The University of British Columbia (Department of Theatre), Credo Inc. (specialized in developing digital tools for human movement and dance) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) (Moving Stories, Website). Dr. Thecla Schiphorst, a LIMS' Certified Laban Movement Analyst and Associate Professor at SFU's School of Interactive Arts and Technology (SIAT), led this research team.

As I mentioned in the Background section of this document, this research was made under the supervision of Dr. Maria Lantin

at ECUAD. Initially, I began this research under the premise of studying movement within the Laban concepts of reach space and how that may change my relationship to objects and space (LMA Principles, Website). However, after giving birth to Owl, the focus organically shifted into two congruent exploratory focus streams. The first involved me moving with weather balloons in indoor and outdoor environments. The second trajectory explored Owl's developmental movement patterns through a motion capture lens, as I was curious about how her movement would evolve and change over time. In both projects, acts of maternal care were often present and then re-enacted or mediated on through various materials and labs.

According to developmental literature, infants' developmental milestones have been studied from multiple perspectives, methodologies and disciplines over the last 100 years. Given the volume of literature already published many areas of research still exist, such as infant object exploration and locomotion and movement visualizations of these behaviours.

I was inspired to create a work that could feature the multidisciplinary process of motion capturing an infant. However, as the project progressed, discussion around visualizations both scientific and artistic and the theme of mothering in a larger context began to arise. In the sessions, my role as a mother, and caretaker came first, so I insured that Owl's basic physical and emotional needs were met first and then I would attend to the capture and research tasks. Over time, the project evolved to include movement patterns and interactions with people and objects in her environment.

These sessions with Owl were held in a large configurable black box space at ECUAD, which housed a Vicon system, a 40-camera capture system used to track movement. The sessions were run by Richard Overington. This operating system mobilized multiple infrared cameras to capture the position of reflective markers at sub-millimeter resolution. For example, the markers were positioned at key locations on Owl's body to reflect infrared light that then would be emitted by LEDs on the cameras.

As a point of reference, infants constantly explore their bodies, and this is the basic foundation of human locomotion. Over time, children amalgamate and learn to engage in their environment and make sense of what is around them. Importantly, babies' sensory systems begin to develop before birth but are relatively immature. As an infant continues to develop and becomes mobile, their sensory system continues to evolve to suit their changing bodily needs. Throughout these sessions with Owl, I observed an evolution of interaction with people and objects, a development of activity preferences, interests/disinterests, and locomotion such as pushing chairs, pushing a broom, jumping off of mats, throwing balls, running in circles and interacting with a talking bear.

As Owl grew, their body proportions changed dramatically and there was more locomotion data captured. This was an interesting development in this research, because it allowed for expressive visualizations to be made from the accumulated data (see Fig. 22-24). The goal at that point was to see if their movement translated across media, between human and machine. As the dialogues and recording sessions continued, I became interested in visualizing and cultivating the ideas. *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) is the first foray into this process of data visualization through layered videos that highlight various unusual environments and other human motion (see Fig. 25-26). Throughout this dissertation research, other concurrent creative opportunities developed and unfolded in nascent ways.

A much larger discussion on how to translate, map and synthesize this unique collection of motion capture data into other potential forms is worth investigating at another time in the future. Still, these ideas of layered data on data, and how imagery and meaning are synthesized, have been important for this project and are a relevant lens to navigate future research and creative outputs.

Weather Balloons

Weather balloons first appeared as a material in my creative practice shortly after Owl was born. The dream image of an orb attached to my arm spurred a frenzy of experiments within

indoor and outdoor environments. These investigations happened in conjunction with the act of caretaking Owl. In a journal entry from that time period, I state:

It is 5:00 a.m. and I have awoken to the sound of a great storm outside my window. As I fall back asleep, I dream of weather balloons. Big and white, they fill the turbulent sky with life, resembling a sac from inside the womb. Untethered, they float up courageously, like vulnerable bodies with breathing organs and tissues splayed for the world to see. Blown up to their full capacity, they transform and glide upwards like mighty graceful explorers, fearlessly circumnavigating the continent (Sun, 2015, 10).

This excerpt highlights how significant the image of the weather balloon was in earlier experiments and how this spherical form propelled creative actions of flight in the landscape. In particular, this text articulates some of the tension between levity and being attached to the ground. This is something innately explored in the 3-channel artwork *Traces of Motherhood* (2016). However, contrary to earlier experiments performed during my master's degree such as *Objects Wrapped in Dreams Wrapped in Objects* (2015), the balloon here symbolizes acceptance and new rituals, a calmer and peaceful meditation on carrying or act of contemplation. It would be in later works where I would fully realize how the intersection between dreaming and waking states provided a bridge between carrying and Carriance. It was in these moments that the practice, experience, and theorization of Carriance developed its form.

Computational Creativity Exhibition at Simon Fraser University

The first iteration of *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) was developed for a graduate seminar show, *Computational Poetics*, at the SFU Surrey Campus. The class was led by Dr. Kate Hennessy. The artwork explores three visualizations of Owl from the motion capture sessions meshed with snippets of meditated actions of me swinging a weather balloon around in rhythmic sequences. Combined together the actions iterate the complexity and simplicity of caretaking Owl.

For the first installation, *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) was situated alongside a varied program of works that integrated digital media in a myriad of forms including: an 8-channel sound performance, multi-channel video installation in a stairwell, single computer screen-based video game, digital auto-portraiture program, sonic and video visualization and an online exhibit analyzing a historic canoe. Interestingly, each work was just as thematically diverse. By presenting media work in various scales, each artist created an array of representations that challenged and mediated the audience's sense of perception.

The installation negotiates the boundary between two sets of projections installed on separate levels of a public stairwell. The stairwell includes sprinkler pipes, concrete floors, fluorescent and natural light, windows, doors and other challenging architectural features (see Fig. 14-16). On the first level, one projector sits on the floor with small speakers placed on either side. The 3-foot looping projection is displayed onto the lower wall of the stairwell landing. On the second lower level, two 12-inch looping projections illuminate the corner walls, aligned in response to the adjacent windows. Both sets of projectors and essential wiring are housed within white wooden boxes sitting on the floor. Spliced throughout the footage are layered, ghost-like visualizations of a child moving in repetitive sequences. The videos are looped and have no fixed beginning or end.

Upon entering the space, the viewer must look up and down the stairwell or crouch down low to see the work and explore the area and take note of the building sounds coupled with the ambient sound composition. Through the prismatic imagery and sound, the viewers are invited to immerse themselves in the experience, perhaps invoking a dreamlike encounter between interior vibrations and exterior reverberations. The sound composition emerges as a looping array of ambient textures of birds, wind, whispers, vocal meanderings and natural environmental reverberations. The sounds fade in an out of time sequence with the figure and balloons movement. The vocals slide up and down scales, while the interplay between breath and humming slowly increases, to

produce internal resonance and haunting tones (see List of Links).

Art and Parenting Exhibition at Unit/Pitt Gallery: April 30, 2016–June 11, 2016

For the second iteration, Gabriel Saloman, the guest curator at the Unit/Pitt Gallery in Vancouver, B.C., selected *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) for a group exhibition in April of 2016. The exhibition theme, *Art & Parenthood*, considered the social, material and aesthetic relationship that parenthood has to artmaking. In particular, the magnitude of parenthood and how it is often made invisible within the art world. This show further highlighted how parenting can be a tremendously transformative influence on the act of creation and the material conditions of artmaking for parents.

This exhibition produced a platform for articulating these experiences, exhibiting art made about—or in the context of—parenting, and challenging the institutional exclusions that separate children from contemporary art (see Fig. 29, the Program and Poster).

The exhibition featured five artworks which were diverse in framing, scale, size and approach: a shelf with eclectic ephemera and filled jars, a full floor of wooden beams, a series of drawings between a child and parent, a 3-channel audio/video work and a series of text situated adjacent to the other installations. Each of the artworks explore notion of care, caretaking and perspectives on the complexities of parenting.

For this exhibition, *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) consisted of one projection illuminated through the front gallery window and two monitors hung low on the adjacent wall. The work was hung low to the ground to engage the audience in the material from a child's perspective (see Fig. 17-18). The two monitors offered two vantage points: a lush green field and a meadow like environment. In both films, a woman weaves in and out of camera frame, moving with a weather balloon across varied terrain and activating the landscape. The second video meshes together ghost-like imagery and traces of a body jumping and moving around alongside a female form moving in and out of frame. The

projection shows two figures moving with a weather balloon in an expansive field. One figure is a woman, the other a small child. Both hold a string attached to an inflated weather balloon.

Derek P. McCormack, in his book *Atmospheric Things: On the Allure of Elemental Envelopment*, discusses the allure of using weather balloons as speculative probes to chart “material continuity between entities and the elemental conditions” (McCormack, 2018, 4–5). Similarly, this thesis research takes up experimental ways of carrying, holding, imagining with this elemental object in hopes of foregrounding elements such as sound, air and story.

As stated earlier, this research takes up the theoretical orientations of Feminist Materialism, the Optical Unconscious, and the Technological Unconscious through explorations of material, immaterial and immersive perspectives. This work foregrounds the modes of production using a variety of technological apparatus, techniques, and capture devices, and highlights unique exhibition strategies and interventions in public and private locations set amongst staircases, sprinkler pipes, concrete floors, light fixtures, windows, doors and other challenging architectural features. In this way, the artwork presents performative traces and gestures that are translated through movement, light and cinematic form.

Building on these ideas and Rosi Braidotti's notions on post-human performativity and how humans enact temporal and spatial sites of co-production, this research makes visible feminist viewpoints on corporeal and inter-corporeal relations (Braidotti, 2007). By this I mean that I see these performative acts as breathing new life into the landscape and as a feminist strategy that creates new patterns and ways of moving through space.

The next section discusses *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), a single-channel artwork that draws attention to the nuanced and particular ways that the home or the domestic sphere can be interpreted or understood through photographic or filmic process. The piece was shown with art/mamas in a group exhibition *SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production* at Fazakas Gallery in 2017.

4.1.4 Project Log

4.1.4.1 Motion Capture Sessions: January 8, 2016–February 12, 2016



Figure 22. *prOphecy sun*, Motion Capture Session at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, 2016.

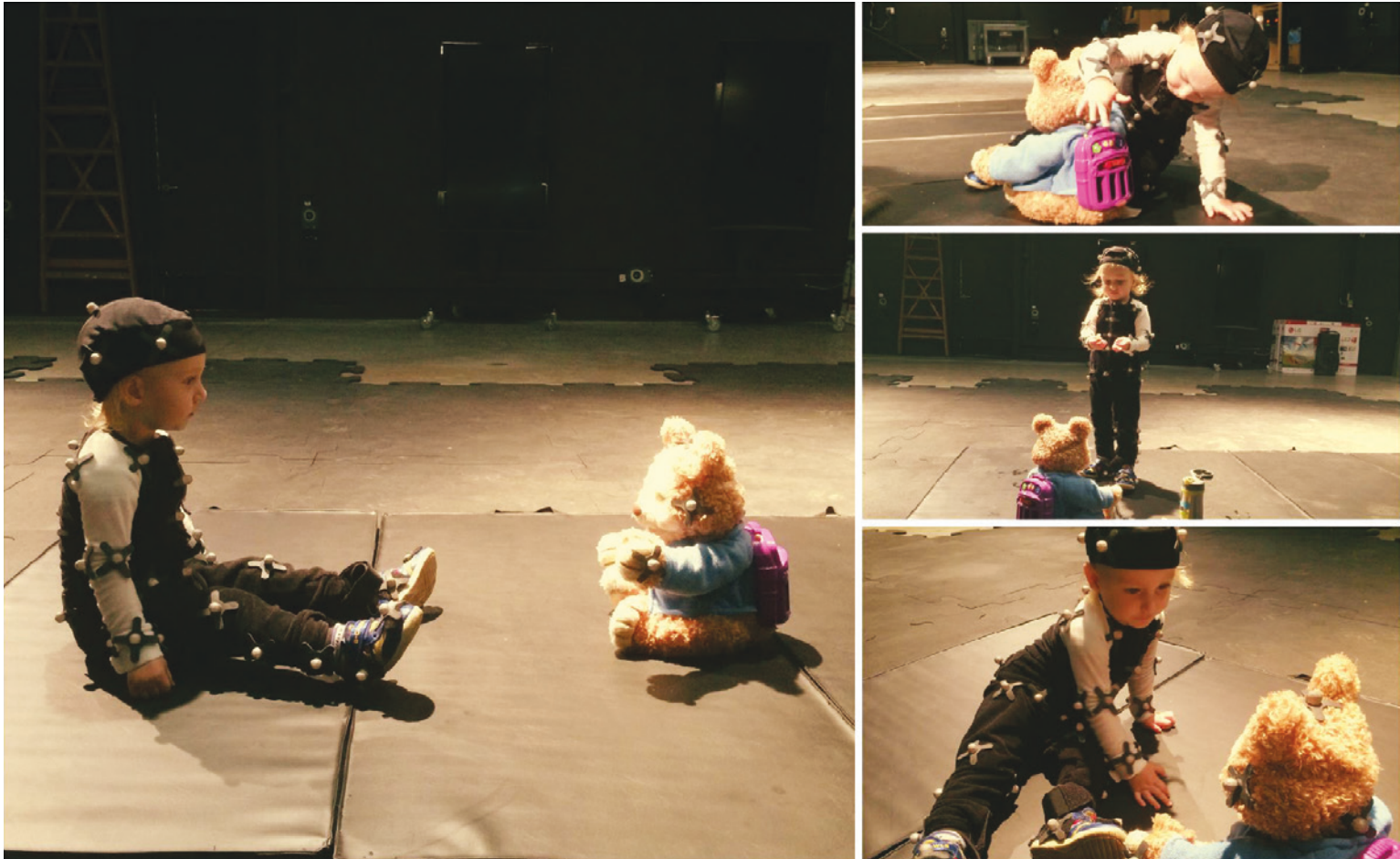


Figure 23. *prOphecy sun*, Motion Capture Session at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, 2016.

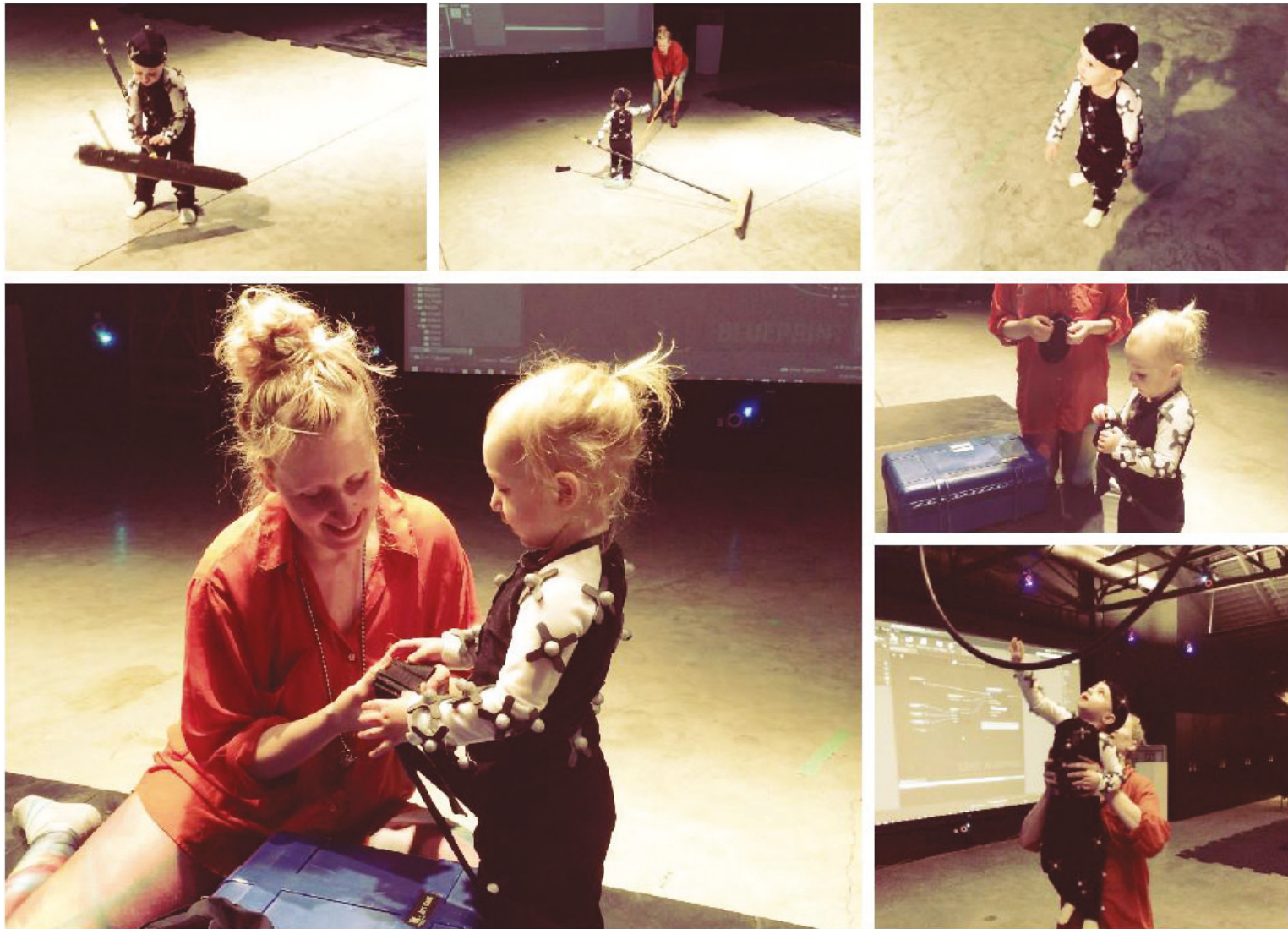


Figure 24. *prOphecy sun*, Motion Capture Session at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, 2016.

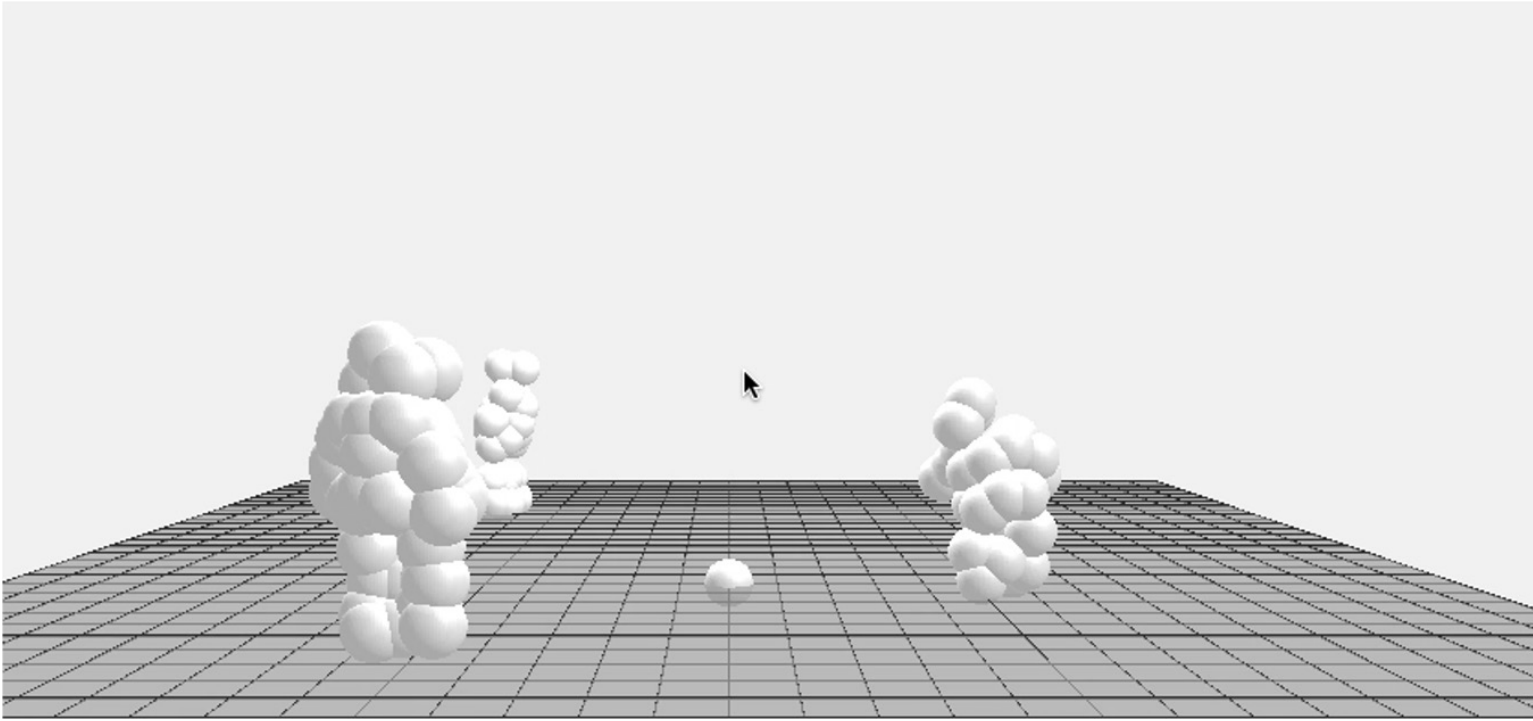


Figure 25. *Motion Capture Visualization, 2016.* Courtesy of Omid Alemi.

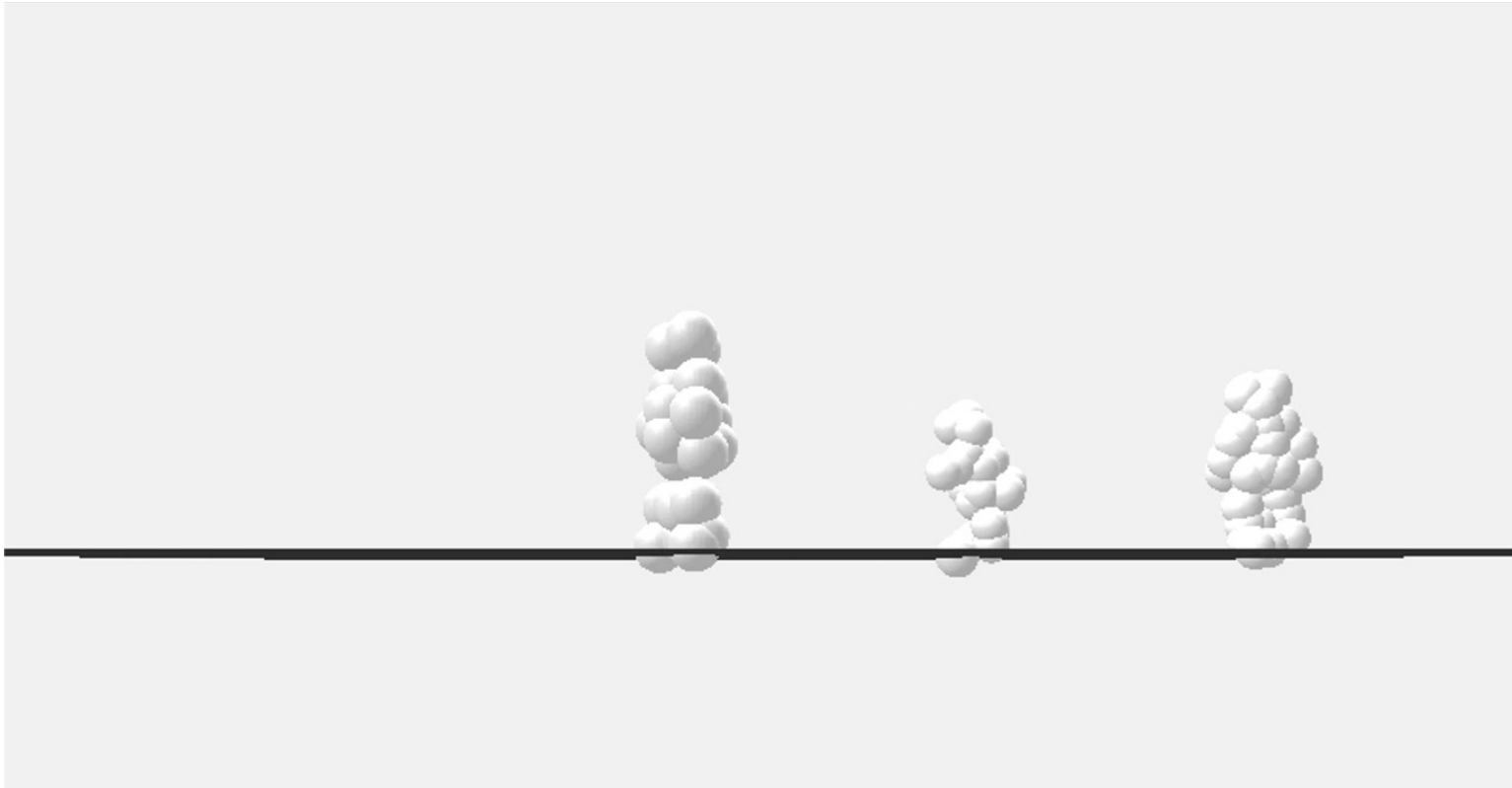


Figure 26. *Motion Capture Visualization, 2016.* Courtesy of Omid Alemi.

MY NOTES: January 8, 2016**Packing List**

- Pack snacks
- Water bottle
- Bring balls, stuffy and talking bear
- Diaper bag, change of clothes
- Charge phone
- Batteries
- Shoes and Mocap outfit
- USB and External Hard drive

Studio

- Dress Owl in Mocap suit and put on reflective markers on body and hat
- Position markers on her body
- Install batteries in the bear
- Rearrange space
- Set-up an obstacle course
- Move mats and chairs into a ramp formation
- Take pictures and video footage

4.1.5 Unit/Pitt Gallery Exhibition Submission: January 29, 2016

Traces of Motherhood, 3-channel A/V installation

by prOphecy sun

Inspired by artists who embrace motherhood, the proposed artwork draws from the tensions that exist between my own subjective experiences of motherhood and the artistic and critical discourse that surrounds it; where boundaries of connection, identity, perception, and experience are blurred (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010, 64-70; 88-91). I will focus on the following questions: What medias help forefront or foreground these relationships? What connections do our senses perceive? And, are these connections immediately apparent to us? The title of my proposed project is *Traces of Motherhood*. The goal of this work is to create a site-specific, multi-channel installation that offers the audience a compelling narrative of motherhood, and the blurred embodiment of self and other (Hayles, 1999).

Over the last 60 years, artists including Mary Kelly, Catherine Opie, Judy Chicago, Monica Bock, and Mary Trunk have developed different approaches to Research-Creation (Reckitt and Phelan, 2001; Schneider, 2011). What has emerged from their artworks and practices are invaluable insights into children, mothers and families' relationships, and their struggles in everyday life (Chrenick, 2003; Liss, 2009). Author Francis Francina poetically suggests, "each person's notion of reality is made up of memories, experiences of the past, which are simultaneously present in individual consciousness" (Francina, 2004, 97-100). Curator Dmitry Bulatov also engages these ideas, however, his work pushes these notions in another direction, alluding to time and the *technological unconscious*, and our ability to perceive different forms of media such as visual, aural, and tactile (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010, 179-180). Bulatov's notions suggest our unconscious minds are pliable or plastic. And our imagination, dreams and experiences are able to transform the boundaries of our reality and identities (Bulatov, Press release).

In the installation *Traces of Motherhood*, I will reflect on these notions of time and experiences of reality. I will use an iPhone to record improvisations, field recordings and sound elements. Smartphone technology is an important tool in my work, and in many ways essential to the type of improvisational representations I want to achieve. Being a new mother has pushed my practice into daily engagements with intimate and adaptive artifacts, such as smartphone technology. This tool communicates with cellphone towers and satellites, which makes it an object that can cross physical and spatial boundaries belying its disarmingly small size (Kahney, 2014). Being small, it can go everywhere, which means its presence is expansive. Smartphones have an ability to capture unconscious moments, and to be present everywhere. Their reach and expressive expanse can even be formulated through the theoretical lens of Timothy Morton's hyperobject (Morton, 2013). Similar in ways to the temporal fluxes occurring in motherhood, where boundaries of connection, perception, and experience are often blurred.

Traces of Motherhood (2016) will consist of two works. The first piece will be a two-channel video and sound work on one wall. The second will be a single channel work displayed through the gallery's front window. I will seek out clean surfaces for both wall/window installations. The work will share space with other exhibition pieces. Inside the gallery, I will install two 24-inch video monitors. The video footage will consist of clips of my daughter moving through outdoor landscapes and fields. The second work will feature the process of the documenting. The video footage will be captured using an iPhone and transferred to HD video in postproduction. The sound composition will emerge as a looping array of ambient and textures and natural environmental sounds.



Figure 27. *prOphecy sun*, Proposed location of installation at Unit/Pitt Gallery, 2016.

4.1.6 Unit/Pitt Gallery Floor Plan: January 02, 2016

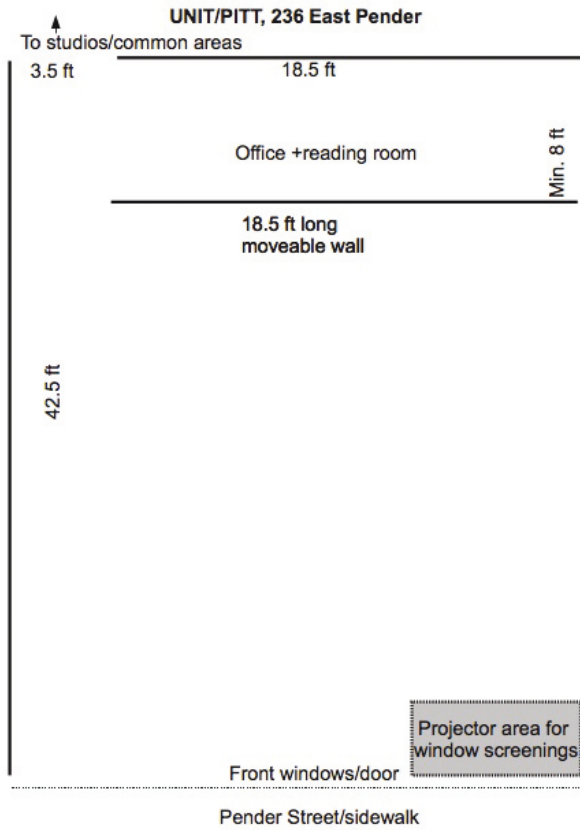


Figure 28. Unit/Pitt Gallery Floor Plan.

4.1.8 Unit/Pitt Gallery Art & Parenthood Exhibition Statement: April 30, 2016

Art & Parenthood

by Unit/Pitt Gallery Guest Curator, **Gabriel Saloman**

Art & Parenthood considers the social, material and aesthetic relationship that parenthood has to art-making. In spite of the enormous effect it has on a person's life, in particular for those who bring a pregnancy to term, parenthood and child raising is often made invisible within the art world. This unique relationship has an overpowering and transformative influence, positively and negatively, on the act of creation and the material conditions of art-making for parents. The exhibition Art & Parenthood is an attempt to produce a platform for articulating these experiences, exhibiting art made about- or in the context of—parenting, and challenging the exclusions that separate children from contemporary art.

This exhibition is coincident with an unexpected, if long overdue, interest in the experience of motherhood and reproductive labour as a subject within North American art. In the last few years, there have been exhibitions ("Mommy," Yale Union, Portland, USA; "The Let Down Reflex," New York, USA; "New Maternalisms", Toronto, Canada; "New Materialisms- Chile," Santiago, Chile), conferences ("Mothernists," Rotterdam, NL; "The Motherhood & Creative Practice Conference," London, UK) and books of academic and artistic research ("New Maternalisms" edited by Dr. Roksana Badruddoja & Rd. Maki Motapanyane; "Mothernism" by Lise Haller Baggesen) concerned with the experience and identity of motherhood, and addressing the intersections of "motherwork" and cultural production. In Vancouver alone there has been a renewed interest in children as artistic collaborators with public artworks, workshops and exhibitions at local artist-run centres such as Western Front, Access Gallery, grunt gallery and others. One can speculate as to what the economic, social or intellectual currents may be indicated by this zeitgeist, but without question we can say that children are a matter of concern.

Art & Parenthood differs from some of these other explorations in two ways. Firstly, it is ambivalent to gender in terms of its scope, including self-identified men and women equally. This is not to disavow the ways in which parenting is gendered as feminine, nor to ignore that, as a result, everything that falls in its purview becomes in some way a target of systemic patriarchy. It is rather an attempt to complicate our assumption as to who is a parent, as a recognition that neither having a womb does not determine gender, nor that parenthood is exclusively the domain of the "mother" to the same extent that it may have been a generation or more ago. Those who bring a pregnancy to term do have a unique relationship to parenthood, and are often expected to bear the greater social, economic and emotional burdens of that role. Still, there is no universal or ideal relationship to parenting that can be articulated without making invisible the multiplicity of experiences belonging to that category.

Secondly, this exhibit is neither prefigurative nor prescriptive; neither modeling an art world where children are centered, nor making "art for children". Instead, it is an exhibition where children are present, where the work is installed to address children and adults simultaneously, if asymmetrically, and the artwork's authorship is ambiguously situated within the relationship between parent and child. In a sense, this exhibition is less concerned with the identity of the parent or a depiction of parenting itself, than it is with these phenomena as forces which shape art and art making. The work of this show is to articulate children as constitutive of art in much the same way that gender, capitalism, the Internet, landscape, migration, materials, pop culture or any other of a multitude of quotidian influences have already been identified in contemporary art.

This exhibition is part of a larger frame of programming at UNIT/PITT Gallery, celebrating its 40th anniversary by imagining the possibilities of cultural production 40 years from now. There are few acts more committed to the future than to consciously bring into the world and raise a child. Nihilism or fatalism have no room in the speculative acts of world-making that child raising necessitates. For some parents, child raising is itself an act of resistance and cultural survivance, refusing the always-present threats of colonial and racialized violence. Not every parent in this exhibition has to worry that their child is 21 times more likely to be shot by police than their white peers, nor is every parent in this exhibition imminently threatened by the fact that more Indigenous children are in Canadian Government custody today than at the heights of residential schools, but some are. Every parent in this exhibition does need to be concerned with the cataclysmic effects of climate change, the accelerating income disparities between the wealthy and poor, the toxic transformation of our psychic and cultural environment due to technology, media and the built environment. Their children are being raised in a very different, very difficult and potentially more dangerous world than the one that existed in the preceding four decades. 40 years is a short amount of time, one that these artists will likely live to see, one that they are accountable for and one that their children will have fully inherited by 2055.

MY NOTES ON VIDEO EDITING: March 1, 2016

- Pull and cut a few sections of video from last three sessions.
- Send Omid c3d files from the FTP site.
- Edit with Omid.
- Download edited files.
- Layer outdoor footage with mocap visualizations.

NOTABLE THOUGHTS: March 17, 2016

- The small reflective markers were attached in regular formation onto the body.
- The success rate of keeping the markers on was high for these sessions. However, some markers were pulled off or fell off and had to be re-attached.
- Owl assisted in the process of attaching the markers to the suit and hat.
- Owl decided on the layout of the space and what order of activities we would try.

4.1.9 Video Shoot: March 28, 2016



Figure 30. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood*, 2016. In process shot. Photo courtesy of Darren Fleet.



Figure 31. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. In process shot. Photo courtesy of Darren Fleet.*

MY NOTES: March 26, 2016

- Choose location with an open and accessible field
- Shoot video with smartphone
- Record environmental sound and movement with a weather balloon
- Create dynamic and ritual-like movement that responds to the environment
- Synthesize the sound and movement in post-production
- Once completed, edit and layer a sequence of motion-capture movement on top of the video footage from the shoot

4.1.10 Sound Composition: April 02, 2016

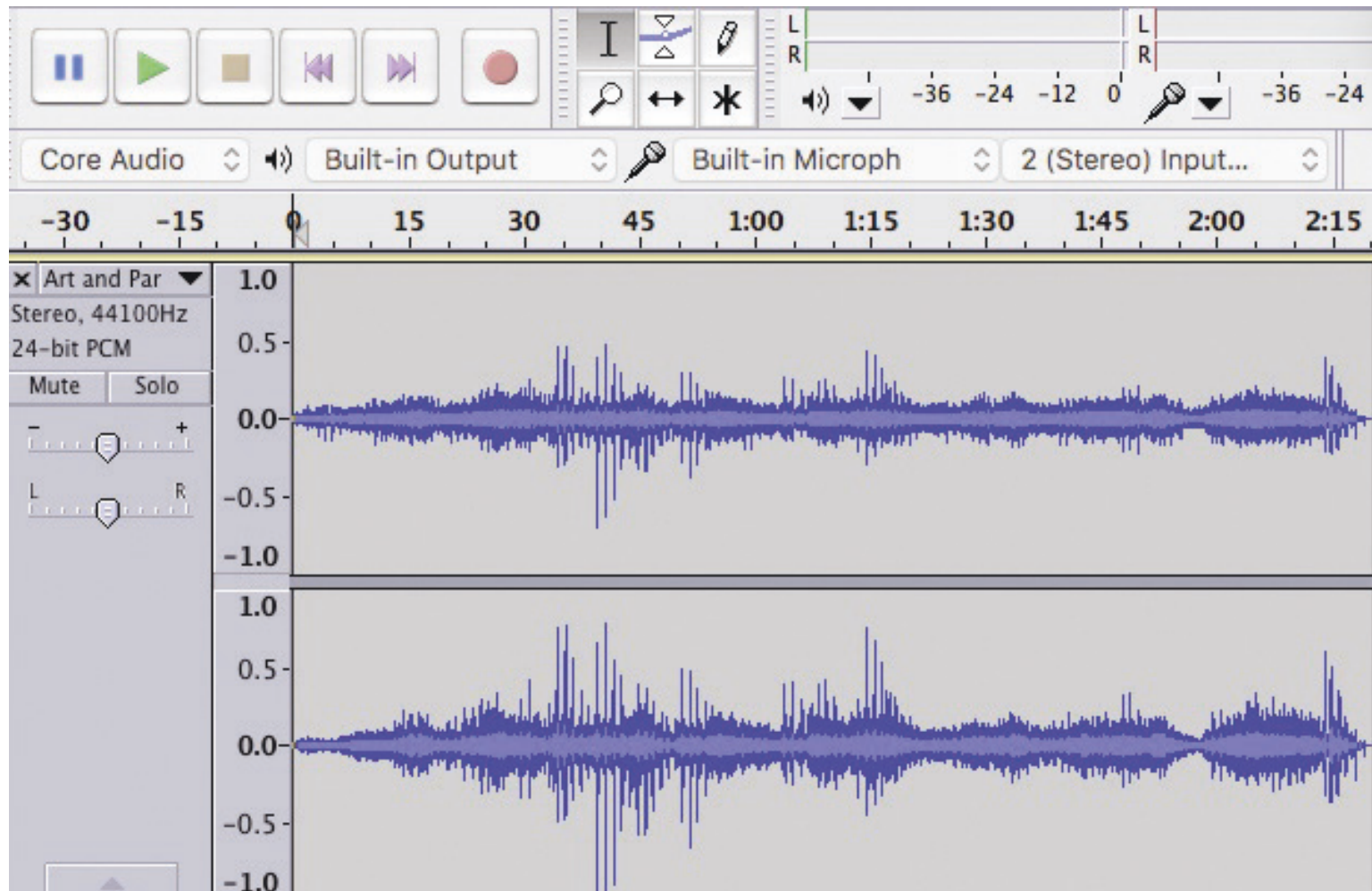


Figure 32. *prOphecy sun, Traces of Motherhood, 2016. Sound Composition in Process.*

4.1.11 Computational Poetics Spring Exhibition at SFU: April 8, 2016

4.1.11.1 Exhibition Poster: April 01, 2016

**COMPUTATIONAL
POETICS
SPRING 2016
EXHIBITION**

Black Box
School of Interactive Arts
and Technology

April 8, 2016
10:30-2:30

The Computational Poetics Seminar is a critical exploration of computational art history, theory and practice. In Spring 2016, led by Dr. Kate Hennessy, participants engaged with critical algorithm studies at the intersections of aesthetics, technology, and society—what Mitchell and Hansen (2010) term ‘the technoanthropological universe’. This exhibition showcases computational art and design works that respond to the ideas explored in the course.

BRYAN MYLES
The Black Eagle Canoe: Online Exhibit

CARL MALMSTRÖM
Auto Portraiture:
Forcing Abstraction and Demanding Patience
to Produce Value within a Selfie-culture

JORDAN MILEV
Halfway between Past and Future:
Visual and Sonic Exploration of Time

LE FANG
Border Cross:
An Experiment on Dynamic Event Planning
for Interactive Narrative

PROPHECY SUN
Traces of Motherhood

YVES CANDAU
Fluid Dynamics

Figure 33. Computational Poetics Spring Exhibition, 2016. Poster courtesy of Kate Hennessy.

MY PREPARATION NOTES: April 1, 2016**Process**

- Locate area for installation
- Find power source
- Get permission from SFU building services
- Get cover for projector
- Book speakers, projector, cords, dongle from library
- Finish editing videos and sound composition
- Arrange childcare for Owl

To Pack

- Extra clothing
- Diaper bag
- Pico projector
- USB with videos and soundtrack
- Tape and scissors
- 3 X Extension cords

Installation

- Collect speakers, projector, cords, dongle from library
- Install the projectors in staircase
- Install the speakers
- Tape down all cords to the floor and walls

INTERLUDE

A Domestic Recipe



Recipe for Potato Leek Soup

Family-filled cook-in adventure involves: collecting ingredients, holding crying baby, then holding screaming toddler, putting down both baby and toddler to cut onions, leeks and garlic, tripping over baby and toddler whilst frying onions, sitting on floor with biting baby who's smacking toddler, straining potatoes, adding leeks and onions to pot, stirring pot, giving toddler a treat, climbing into cupboard with nursing baby, not fitting into cupboard, awkwardly escaping cupboard, stirring pot, chasing baby and toddler, serving soup when ready.

Ingredients

Bag of red or yellow organic potatoes
3-4 long leeks
2 red or regular cooking onions
1 head of garlic
3-4 veg bouillon cubes
2-3 green onions
Copious amount of salt and pepper

To Serve

Serve with beautiful fresh, homemade walnut bread
Serve with fresh cut green onions
Add copious amount of salt and pepper

Directions

- Wash and dice potatoes and throw into large pot
- Add water to pot put on stove
- Bring potatoes to a boil
- Strain and add 6 cups boiled water to potato pot
- Add 3-4 veg bouillon cubes
- Dice leeks, onions and garlic
- In a separate pan, add olive oil and lightly sauté onions and leeks until clear or lightly golden, add garlic and fry until golden
- Combine leek and onion mixture to the boiled potato pot
- Occasionally stir pot while adding salt or pepper to taste
- Continue cooking on medium to low for 1 hour



Figure 34. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #6, 2020.

4.2 *Domestic Cupboards*

Medium	Single-channel A/V installation
Location	Fazakas Gallery, Vancouver BC
Materials	Kitchen Cupboards, smartphone, tripod, AAXA Pico projector
Photographs & video stills	prOphecy sun, Darren Fleet, art/mamas
Link	https://prophecysun.com/Domestic-Cupboards



This section discusses the single-channel audio and video artwork *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), which was shown in the group exhibition *SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production* with art/mamas at Fazakas Gallery from March 8–31st, 2017. This artwork is an iteration on *Cupboards* (2011), a single-channel artwork that I made in response to navigating a new relationship with Darren Fleet.

This work takes up two of the three theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism and the Optical Unconscious. This research also takes up the subtheme of Domestic Labour—unpaid work in the home (Huws, 2019). Building on these approaches, *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) requires the viewer to follow me and my two young children through the act of climbing through the family’s kitchen cupboards. Through the low placement of the shooting apparatus, which included a smartphone, tripod and wide lens, I draw attention to notions of Carriance, the everyday, the mundane, and shed light on aspects of the domestic sphere which are often overlooked. The piece foregrounds sensory, visual, and digital methods.

In the following pages, I include digital ephemera such as exhibition shots, reflections, a curatorial interview, promotional material, video stills, process and other documentation as way to show the evidence of Carriance.

Previous page: Figure 35. prOphecy sun, Domestic Cupboards, 2017. Video Still. Film still courtesy of Darren Fleet.



Figure 36. *prOphecy sun*, *Domestic Cupboards*, 2017. Video stills.



Figure 37. prOphecy sun, Domestic Cupboards, 2017. Video Still.

4.2.1 Exhibition Documentation at Fazakas Gallery: March 8, 2017



Figure 38. *prOphecy sun, Domestic Cupboards*, 2017. Installation view from *art/mamas* group exhibition. Photo courtesy of Matilda Aslizadeh of *art/mamas*.



Figure 39. prOphecy sun, *Domestic Cupboards*, 2017. Installation view from art/mamas group exhibition. Photo courtesy of Matilda Aslizadeh of art/mamas.

Domestic Cupboards Presentation Statement: March 8, 2017

Presentation Text

Domestic Cupboards (2017) is a single-channel video installation portraying the negotiations of a mother and her two young children in the act of a play in a familial kitchen. The piece was shot in one take with an iPhone and tripod in Vancouver BC.

4.2.2 Reflection

Photographs bear witness to a human choice being exercised in a given situation. A photograph is a result of the photographer's decision that it is worth recording that this particular event or this particular object has been seen.

If everything that existed were continually being photographed, every photograph would become meaningless. A photograph celebrates neither the event itself nor the faculty of sight in itself.

A photograph is already a message about the event it records. The urgency of this message is not entirely dependent on the urgency of the event, but neither can it be entirely independent from it. At its simplest, the message, decoded, means: I have decided that seeing and this is worth recording (Berger, 2013, 292).

In the above quote, John Berger states that photographs bear witness to many unseen situations that are worth seeing.

While the complexities and paradoxes of the above text are plenty, the main point here is that photographs provide documentation and are witnesses to an assemblage of moments or events. Taking this as a starting point, the following text considers the conceptual framework of *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) and the importance of Carriance. I discuss how the digital ephemera and preparatory documentation such as an interview with curator LaTeisha Fazakas, provide vital insights about the entanglement of carrying and collaboration, especially as seen through the domestic sphere, maternal events, mundane and everyday moments. This section draws attention to this documentation which shows Carriance, familial linkages, and domestic spaces

because our lives are often shaped by our experiences with others in intimate ways. For example, domestic spaces are places where solo or collaborative activities such as the sharing of meals, cleaning, sleeping, working or entertaining take place.

Traditionally, photographs of domestic spaces are overlooked, and many rooms are hidden from view. Most often this is because this realm is intertwined with notions of the private and familial life. Arguably, that domestic spaces are generally full of social memories, ingrained routines, ritual and often gendered ways of approaching habitus. Chiara Leonadi et al., describe domestic space as a territory of meaning, stating:

The domestic environment is more than a place where to live. It is a territory of meaning, a place where pleasure, affect and aesthetics are deeply interwoven with the functional and utilitarian dimensions (Leonadi et al, 2009, 1703).

Here, the domestic zone is framed as the home—a place of complex interrelationships, remembrance, and a stable emotional centre. However, the spatial dimensions and representations of the home change with motherhood. As Sarah Hardy and Caroline Wiedmer point out, tensions exist between the lived experiences of motherhood versus outside societal perspectives, expectations and representations on what this domain actually entails (Hardy and Wiedmer, 2005). For example, iconic images of motherhood proliferate the market and are presented through text, objects such as stamps or valorized on magazine covers, film and social sites. I see the domestic space as more complicated than what is often portrayed in these media circles. For instance, living rooms can be marooned with children's toys and flipped over furniture for forts or jumping games. In this sense, these spaces are a confluence of messy encounters and full of performative enactments.

In Judith Butler's book *Bodies that Matter*, she articulates notions of the performed body, gender as a social construct, and how bodies take on performative elements to be accepted in

heteronormative cultures (Butler, 1993). I mention this here to highlight how perspectives such as Butler's acknowledge the deep patriarchal tensions that exist in domestic spheres and how certain bodies (mothers) are expected to caretake others and perform roles such as cooking or other maintenance acts in public and private situations. Lena Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee's "Manifesto for Maternal Performance (Art) 2016!" similarly write about care, domesticity, maternal experiences and ritualized performances that disrupt, what they call, "actions of the maternal," and reject, "desire for development and progress" (Šimic and Underwood-Lee, 2018).^{64 65} They state:

We will write for forty days. Forty days to mirror the fortyweek gestation period during which a human mother carries her child. We are pregnant with political and performance possibilities. We have decided to write alongside our making—our Manifesto will be born of practice. Our co-writing will be separated over geographic and temporal space, Liverpool and Cardiff, email, Skype and phone conversations with only occasional meetings in Birmingham, in a real-time and physical location. Yet, our writing will constantly be in response to, and developed and supported by, the absent other. We will be in relation (Šimic and Underwood-Lee, 2017, 131).

Particularly relevant in this discussion on Carriance and the domestic realm is what Šimic and Underwood-Lee describe as continual collaborative processes happening over different temporal and geographical spaces and how their roles as writers and mothers in domestic spheres created a continuous relationality and carrying action for each other. In this sense, Carriance is embodied and tied up in relational actions, events and structures—the taking and the giving of energy.

The domestic space as represented in other mediums such as in theatrical performance and in exhibition contexts can be equally complex. For example, James Hewison and Michelle Man, in their book chapter *Imaginarium: Dancing with Carrington*, write about their choreographic processes of embodying and mobilizing

aspects of copoiesis—collaboration—through live performances art pieces with cabbages (Hewison, Man, 2020). What I find particularly evocative about this approach of performing choreographic sequences with vegetables is the focus on advocating for the material to the same degree as the other performer. In this sense, the material, environment, actions and the performers are all equally weighted and considered. Each element, event, tissue, leaf, or organ, carries and aids the other.

Another example of the importance of interrelationships and Carriance can be shown in the interview I did with curator LaTiesha Fazakas of Fazakas Gallery about the group exhibition *SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production* (2017) with art/mamas. In the interview, she draws attention to the importance of story, collaborative processes, and the tensions that exist between domestic and commercial approaches to artmaking. For her, domestic space on display offers moments for audiences to explore the unglamorous intimacy of others. She states:

The importance of the work was how it allowed viewers to become voyeurs in a sense—they became part of a private, cozy morning between a mother and her children in a kitchen. The kitchen plays an important role as a setting because it harks back to the domestic sphere, which has been solidified as a point of examination for artists since the '60s. The setting for the video work also solidified that the kitchen has now become part of the visual language that we use in art historical contexts when we interrogate themes surrounding the domestic (Fazakas).

Here the concept of private and domestic are highlighted and examined. Fazakas also explains how integral her mother was in the process of naming, making, and realizing the exhibition space and how the strength of that relationship carried her forward. She talks about the impact her mother's passing had on her decision-making process, stating:

[M]y mother was a person who cared very deeply about relationships with others, and I believe in a way that this is what

guided the first steps when creating this exhibition. I also felt it important to bring in a lot of diversity to the show in order to reflect a very complex vision of womanhood and its role in art making and viewing (Fazakas).

Fazakas further articulates how vital it was for her to connect and bring in a diversity of approaches to notions of womanhood in an institutional space. In particular, how important it was for her to empower women with nurturing. She states:

Conveniently, my mother's name is Sheila, and I realized her name worked in so many ways to illustrate the layered complexity of the Feminine—a fully loaded concept in and of itself. Sheila, being a word for a 'girl', is made up of She-I—and La. It was all in that name for me. I was able to navigate between the personal and universal and use the title of the exhibition as a structuring guide to work through the multiple subjectivities of the female experience. I suppose it was also a mixture of nurture and power, the power in nurture and the ability we have to empower with nurturing. Although it is often argued that femininity is a site of construction, it is nevertheless a construction which we can design and define on an individual level and work through various concepts of the feminine and what that means. Because of the contemporary complexity to the term and its experiences, I wanted to explore its ambivalence, contradiction, and precarious aspect through the show (Fazakas).

Fazakas reminds us about the importance of creating supportive environments that showcase diverse female experiences. This approach situates Carriance in the context of public space and opens up questions that emerge from current discourse on photographic and filmic process and the importance of collaboration and community in enabling these practices to emerge.

Domestic spaces are also associated with social class, profession and other nuanced particularities of a site. Domestic spaces have also been the subject of filmmakers since the the 1890's.

For instance, in the Lumière and the Skladanowsky brothers' films, they explored a variety of urban and domestic scenes such as workers leaving factories, performers juggling or dancing, babies eating, and scenes of cars, traffic, trains, and animals using wide-angle cinematography (History Magazine, web). The legacy of the experimental filmmakers has radically shaped and influenced contemporary culture and artists. More recently, portable and accessible capture devices have proliferated the market, providing artists and experimenters the ability to capture the domestic sphere in detail. Explored another way, the domestic landscape has been explored in a multitude of material and immaterial forms that include film, literature, magazine, reality TV and other social sites that have emerged with this technological development. Importantly, how a personal space is presented through images, film, or other dissemination can dictate how someone is depicted in other realms of life. For example, some Instagram sites promote well-manicured, and idyllic versions of mothered spaces. While others entirely negate or avoid showing any version of this realm in entirety.

I see the domestic space as an complex encounter with multiple levels of habitual compositions—a wonderous and nurturing landscape and also a holding space of isolation.

This is the premise of *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), a single-channel audio video piece that was shown in the all-female art/mamas group exhibition, *Sheila: Women, Art, and Production*, at the Fazakas Gallery in Vancouver, BC (see Fig. 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39). In the artwork, I climb through my kitchen cupboards with my two young children (see Fig. 36). Through domestic, improvised acts like climbing, holding and escaping into the cupboards, this piece enacts what Butler calls exclusionary acts to counter dominant domestic systems. The soundtrack emerges as a combination of domestic sounds, a baby's cry and other bodily sounds (see Fig.38). Inspired by the rich legacy of feminist production in front of the camera by well-known artists such as Trisha Brown, Yvonne Rainer, Agnès Varda, Cindy Sherman, and Hannah Wilke, *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) explores the self-reflexive, vulnerable and

unpredictable process of mothering in the everyday (Sanjoy, 2010; Carrie Lambert-Beatty, 2008; Sherman, Tate Exhibition, 2016; Wilke, Website).^{66 67 68 69}

This re-configuration of a domestic space is a visual manifesto to mothering in all forms, both real and imagined. What I mean is that the artwork is a snapshot of an encounter with my children and the domestic space. The piece was shot in one take and with the aid of filmic apparatus. In this way, the piece becomes dynamic, frozen, or an amplified connection to an othered/mothered space. As David Bates articulates, images have the power to be more-than-visual, since they are complex, unique, and leave room for interpretation. For example, an image may mean one thing for one person and another for something else. This circles back to Berger's point that photographs bear witness to human experiences (Berger, 2013, 292). What this implies is that images can be remembered through our experiences of sounds, or through gestures and actions (Bates, 2011).⁷⁰

This research also considers strategies and digital capture using handheld technologies and apparatus as a way to experience spatiality through embodied, conceptual and perceptual realms (Lefebvre, 1991).^{71 72} For example, the piece was conceived on the go, with little preparation time, and executed with the intention of creating a series of repetitive performative actions through a set of kitchen cupboards with my two young children (see Fig. 35-37). The experimental process involved aspects from previous experimental approaches used in other works such as improvisation,

Rasaboxes and RSVP Cycles to explore the domestic space and emotional connection.^{73 74 75} These approaches stem from my movement background in improvisational methods with *Dance Troupe Practice*, a movement collective based in Vancouver BC.

This research also highlights and grounds my laboured experiences of performing for intimate audiences and juggling being a new mother of two. This work is also part of a larger research agenda with art/mamas focused on the intersections of feminism(s), motherhood, reproductive and artistic labour. In this way, the artwork draws attention to bodies in domestic spaces and notions of Carriance through exhibition and other digital ephemera. In particular, this work draws out the tensions on maternal labour, maintenance acts, gender, identity and sexuality and the societal challenges that exist in media on what a mother should be and how they should act.⁷⁶

The next section discusses *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017), a live performance and two-channel audio and video installation, which was shown in the festival, Dance in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios on November 17, 2017. This research takes up some of the exploratory approaches covered thus far in this chapter, namely improvisation, movement and Feminist Materialist Research-Creation strategies of production on the go. The section also highlights the importance of Carriance as evidenced through interview, preparatory and performance documentation.

4.2.3 Art/Mamas Panel Discussion at Fazakas Gallery: March 18, 2017

Art Mamas Panel Discussion
 March 18th, 2 – 4 p.m.
 Fazakas Gallery
 688 E Hastings St

Featuring: Gabriella Aceves-Sepulveda, Matilda Aslizadeh, Sarah Shamash, Heather Passmore, Maria Anna Parolin, Natasha McHardy, Damla Tamer, and prOphecy sun.

This group of Vancouver-based artist mothers will be presenting a unique collective and heterogeneous artist talk on motherhood and art practice and the intersections between reproductive and artistic labour. The panel discussion, in the form of an informal dialogue, will elaborate a utopian model for a feminist, women-centred, sustainable creation process that integrates life and all of its chaos into a viable and valued way of being and creating without being marginalized by and excluded from the male-dominated art system.



Figure 40. art/mamas, 2017. Panel discussion. Fazakas Gallery.

4.2.4 Art/Mamas Panel Discussion at Fazakas Gallery Notes: March 18, 2017

MY NOTES FROM THE ART/MAMAS PANEL DISCUSSION AT FAZAKAS GALLERY: March 18, 2017

- Mothering is integrating with everything and interconnected.
- Art world has this thing of disconnected people from their creative forces and creation happens in a vacuum.
- Institutional vs. parenting.
- Expectations, logistics, childcare and facilitation.
- Artmaking became a different thing after having a child.
- Artmaking is not going to happen the way it happened before and not in the way I will imagine.
- As a mother, we are unsettling dominant systems, or are part of them.
- Different institutions are trying to make space for parents and creative live schedules,
- How do mothers fit in? What does a successful art career look like?
- Legitimacy and ways to celebrate all of the different stages of a mother's art career and practice.
- Once we had kids, how do we define practice?

4.2.5 Fazakas Gallery Press Statement: March 8, 2017

SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production, Fazakas Gallery, 688 E Hastings St., Vancouver, BC.

March 8–31st, 2017

*Please join us for the opening reception of an all-female group exhibition to coincide with **International Women's Day 2017**, featuring work by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous multidisciplinary contemporary artists.*

Artists: Gabriela Aceves-Sepulveda, Matilda Aslizadeh, Jeneen Frei Njootli, Robyn Laba, Natasha McHardy, Yvonne Muinde, Joyce Ozier, Heather Passmore, Maria Anna Parolin, Rosa Quintana-Lillo, Sarah Shamash, prOphecy sun, Damla Tamer, Charlene Vickers, and Carollyne Yardley.

Panel talks facilitated by the artists, as well as individuals from the local arts scene and the DTES, will be held at Fazakas Gallery on each Saturday of the month, beginning on March 11th.

As well, an **online auction** will take place from March 8–31st to benefit **Sheway**, a pregnancy outreach program located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

4.2.6 Art/Mamas Biography from Art/Mamas Website: January 2019

art/mamas Biography

art/mamas are a group of Vancouver-based artist mothers, featuring Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, Matilda Aslizadeh, Robyn Laba, Natasha McHardy, Maria Anna Parolin, Heather Passmore, Sarah Shamash, prOphecy sun and Damla Tamer. The group is a unique collective working within the intersections of feminism(s), motherhood, reproductive and artistic labour.

In 2016, the collective was formed in response to a practical need for accountability, encouragement, and feedback in the process of making new work, and a desire to articulate a model for feminist, women-centered, sustainable creation processes that integrate life and all of its chaos into a viable and valued way of being and creating. This positive valuation of their unique lived experiences as individuals juggling the challenges of parenting, making a living, and creative production in its many forms is positioned against the dominant culture of art production, which increasingly mimics a corporate model of production, marketing, PR and specialization.

Art/mamas meets once a month to critique and discuss work in progress of one of the members, as well as to share the recent experiences in an open forum. In March of 2017, they were invited to exhibit artwork and lead a panel discussion at Fazakas Gallery for the group show titled SHE-I-LA: Women, Art, and Production. The responses to this event from other artist mothers—both those whose children are now grown and new mothers—had a strong impact on the group and made the group realize that the dialogues they were having could be shared with and benefit a larger, intergenerational community. In October 2017, art/mamas exhibited at the Arbutus Gallery at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and the collective is the subject of a recent article in Galleries West, as well as a short CBC documentary production.

4.2.7 Project Log

4.2.7.1 The Making: February 2017 – March 4, 2017



Figure 41. *prOphesy sun*, *Cupboards*, 2010. Video stills.

Cupboards Presentation Statement: April 2, 2011

Presentation Text

An 8-minute A/V performance video consisting of a single-frame image captured from the wall of a domestic kitchen. I created *Cupboards* as an emotional reaction to being in a new relationship (see Fig. 41). The experience of trying to fit into his cupboards is the quintessential experience for me that show me that my world of perception is what I make it. My body and voice are subjected to the self-made ritual of opening, pushing, balancing, squeezing and climbing through his habitual space—his kitchen cupboards.

MY NOTES ON THE MAKING: February 3, 2017

- Create a piece that emulates and iterates the artwork *Cupboards* (2010) (see Fig. 41)
- Clear cupboards of all pots and pans
- Climb through the space
- Film in one take
- Have both children in the shot
- Play with the theme: Domestic space as landscape
- Film in the day
- Place camera low to the ground
- Film piece for 20 minutes and edit in post
- Improvise and be in the moment
- Consider safety for children
- Negotiate and explore the space

4.2.7.2 Art/Mamas Meetings: February 2017 - March 2017

Figure 42. *art/mamas*, 2017. Exhibition and installation meeting in studio.

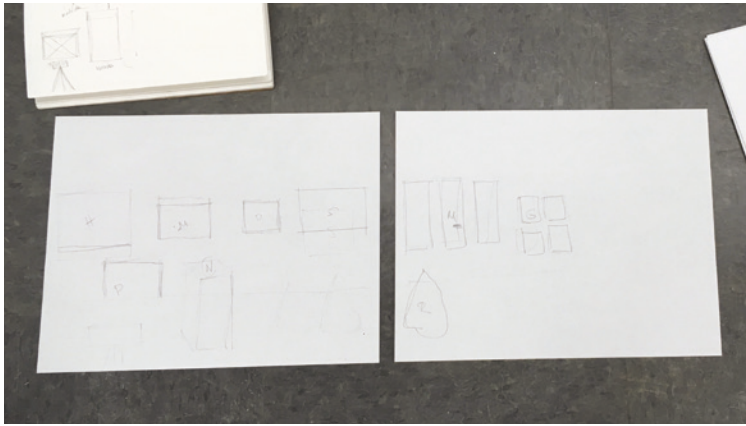


Figure 43. *art/mamas*, 2017. Exhibition layout.

MY NOTES FROM ART/MAMAS MEETING:
Feb 16, 2017

Film me moving through my kitchen cupboards.
Keep it unrehearsed, improvised and in the moment.
Work with the theme: Domestic space as landscape.

MY NOTES FROM ART/MAMAS MEETING:
FEB 19, 2017

Show Themes:

- “Reflection of day” or “Domestic space as landscape”
- “The wall is fragment of us all”
- “Horror of the domestic”
- “Gendered labour”
- “Reproductive Labour and artistic labour” or “social mode or condition”

Exhibition at Fazakas Gallery and art/mamas Panel

- Install March 4-5th, 2017
- Opening on Wednesday, March 8th, 7-9pm
- Panel on March 18th, 2-4pm

Goal is to keep it simple

Visually what are we making?

My piece—conceptually playing with movement, sound and video reflecting on a familial moment of the day

Light sound of household and everydayness of mothering

Borrow Gabriela’s tripod

Install with Pico Projector on tripod low to ground and in a loop

Ambient sounds play throughout the gallery

4.2.8 Installation of *Domestic Cupboards* at Fazakas Gallery: March 5, 2017



Figure 44. *art/mamas*, 2017. Installation set-up.



Figure 45. art/mamas, 2017. Installation set-up.

4.2.9 Curatorial Conversation via Email with LaTiesha Fazakas: March 09, 2020

Fazakas Gallery Director and Curator LaTiesha Fazakas and I spoke over email correspondence while she was in transit in New York during the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. I wanted to speak with LaTiesha because of her experience curating the group exhibition *SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production* with art/mamas at Fazakas Gallery. In that exhibition, I showed my single-channel piece *Domestic Cupboards* (2017). In particular, I wanted to hear her reflections on mothering and her perspective on the intersections of institutional and domestic space.

When I first met LaTiesha, I was immediately struck by her earnest approach and consideration for the art/mamas installation and how she facilitated the art/mamas artist panel, which is discussed at the end of this section. What emerges in the following text is the importance of including feminist perspectives on motherhood in an exhibition setting, and, in particular, 1) how data and creativity are linked and, 2) how our level of engagement is informed with information and creative practice and, 3) how interconnected production and technologies are in our everyday lives.

LaTiesha Fazakas has been dedicated to studying Contemporary Indigenous Art since 2020. While completing her degree in Art History at the University of British Columbia, she worked as an art dealer in Vancouver where she gained the experience and expertise that gave her the tools to establish Fazakas Gallery in 2013.

prOphecy sun (PS): How did you select the artwork for the exhibition?

LaTiesha Fazakas (**LTF**): For me, one of the most important aspects when selecting artworks for an exhibition are the artists themselves—selecting the people first. The show was born in part because I was reflecting on my place in the world as a woman, and what being a woman meant to me. My mother had just passed the year before, and my relationship with her was at the forefront of my mind when thinking about the show. Her presence throughout the process came in the form of relationships.

That is, my mother was a person who cared very deeply about relationships with others, and I believe in a way that this is what guided the first steps when creating this exhibition. I also felt it important to bring in a lot of diversity to the show in order to reflect a very complex vision of womanhood and its role in art making and viewing.

PS: What was the theme of the exhibition?

FTF: Conveniently, my mother's name is Sheila, and I realized her name worked in so many ways to illustrate the layered complexity of the Feminine—a fully loaded concept in and of itself. Sheila, being a word for a “girl”, is made up of She–I–and La. It was all in that name for me. I was able to navigate between the personal and universal and use the title of the exhibition as a structuring guide to work through the multiple subjectivities of the female experience. I suppose it was also a mixture of nurture and power, the power in nurture and the ability we have to empower with nurturing. Although it is often argued that femininity is a site of construction, it is nevertheless a construction which we can design and define on an individual level and work through various concepts of the feminine and what that means. Because of the contemporary complexity to the term and its experiences, I wanted to explore its ambivalence, contradiction, and precarious aspect through the show.

PS: What was the format of the exhibition?

FTF: The exhibition took the form of a 1-month series of activities, panel discussions, and performances. It was important to us as organizers of the show that the exhibition, and all its encompassing activities, extended beyond a one-night opening, and reached out into the communities outside of the local arts scene. Throughout the month of March, we staged a series of panel discussions each Saturday afternoon as a public program, for a total of three talks. The first Saturday was a panel discussion between participating artists Matilda Aslizadeh, Jenny Hawkinson, Natasha McHardy, Yvonne Muinde, Joyce Ozier, and a performance by Charlene Vickers.

The second talk was an informal dialogue with the Art Mamas, a group of Vancouver-based artist mothers with a unique collective and heterogeneous presentation on motherhood and art practice and the intersections between reproductive and artistic labour. Art Mamas function as utopian model for a feminist, women-centred, sustainable creation process that integrates life and all of its chaos into a viable and valued way of being and creating without being marginalized by and excluded from the male-dominated art system. Speakers included you, Gabriella Aceves-Sepulveda, Matilda Aslizadeh, Sarah Shamash, Heather Passmore, Maria Anna Parolin, Natasha McHardy, and Damla Tamer.

The third talk was a DTES panel meant to give voice to the community in which the gallery is part. It was facilitated by the following women: Renae Morriveau, Actor and Indigenous Storyteller-in-Residence at the Vancouver Public Library; Savannah Walling, Associate Artistic Director, Heart of the City Festival; Haisla Collins, Community Murals and participant in Big Print Project; Kazuho Yamamoto, Former coordinator for DTES Small Arts Grants; Dalannah Gail Bowen—DTES Centre for the Arts/Quilt Project for Missing Women.

Lastly, we wanted to do something for some of the most vulnerable women in our community with an online charity auction to support Sheway, a DTE pregnancy outreach program.

PS: How important is the new media artwork in the exhibition?

LTF: The new media work offered a point of departure to enter into discussions ranging from new creative directions in the visual arts, to conversation around the digital versus analog, but also lent itself to ideas around ‘story’ and a glimpse into moments in the artist’s life. The work invited viewers into a domestic space, while viewing the piece in a commercial public setting (the gallery).

The importance of the work was how it allowed viewers to become voyeurs in a sense—they became part of a private, cozy morning between a mother and her children in a kitchen. The

kitchen plays an important role as a setting because it harks back to the domestic sphere, which has been solidified as a point of examination for artists since the ‘60s. The setting for the video work also solidified that the kitchen has now become part of the visual language that we use in art historical contexts when we interrogate themes surrounding the domestic.

PS: For you, is there a link between creative work and data? If so, what?

LTF: I think multiple links exist between the two, but in particular the ways in which creative work directly approaches data. That is, how creative work can make visual what is often broken down into complex charts and graphs of information. In particular, by translating information into aesthetic forms to create greater awareness of contemporary issues that are often simply presented through the abstracted and unapproachable world of numbers. I think creative work really allows for new ways of thinking about information as a whole: our production, consumption, and overall engagement with data on a personal as well as global level. In addition, since I do believe in a holistic approach to art, I don’t feel that data or information that is in the realm of the maths and sciences needs to be segregated as such, but can be a very useful tool to use when thinking about information. Although we may still need to visually get there, it’s useful to unpack the visual outcome of collected data beyond the usual charts and graphs we are confronted with.

PS: How important is the relationship between the artist and the curator?

LTF: I think it’s very important for there to be a relationship of open communication. Together, they can create something quite beautiful. Each is interdependent on the other, and yet has their own voice and vision that adds to the reception of the work. It is also the navigation between community and individual, both together and singularly, while working through the complicated world of artmaking and practice, institutions such as galleries, museums, as well as academia, and also collectors and art-appreciators. Navigating this web of relationships together is a

challenge which, when working through it together, can be an overwhelming yet rewarding experience. Although the importance of the curator is to respect the artist as owner in perpetuity, it is also the curator's job to bring their own flavour and perspective to the work as it is released into the world. There needs to be that room for freedom in interpretation, and space for contradiction to the artist's intention, all the while respecting and acknowledging those differences and opinions.

PS: Do feminist artworks change the gallery spectatorship? If so, how do their interests, process or artworks change the viewership?

LTF: I believe it encourages more female engagement and viewership—we are naturally drawn to shows that we feel reflect ourselves or tell us something new and exciting. Moreover, it is important that the feminist artworks not be framed as “add-ons” or “special interest topics” to the roster of works otherwise present in the gallery, but that they are part and parcel with every other work in the space, informing the pieces around them and vice-versa. Having feminist works present also provides diverse experiences and subjectivities for viewers to get a broad sense of the incredible topics that feminist works explore, and to see and experience differences amongst one another.

PS: In what ways do contemporary artists address current issues on technology, spectatorship, climate, visibility or media consumption?

LTF: I think contemporary artists address these concerns and many more by *being* artists—a political gesture in itself. They give thoughtful critique to our political, economic and social systems through their artistic practices—at times even pushing communities to engage thoughtfully and make steps toward social progress. Whether connecting with people's emotions on a matter, making the personal political, or making visible what can otherwise be difficult to put into words, a multiplicity of senses and reactions can be triggered to provoke action within the public about various topics.

PS: How did the recent exhibition challenge institutional art practice? If so, how?

LTF: I think that due to it being a month long series of discussions, it challenged the idea of the white cube being a space of silence mystique, and instead offered a platform for multiple voices to tune in with one another and share their stories; make accessible and visible the very real concerns facing women who are artists today. In the form of an action, this gesture allowed for social themes and issues to be explored, and to further think about art as social practice in the 21st century.

PS: What themes, ideas, reflections or impacts have emerged from this exhibition?

LTF: Numerous themes were explored through the exhibition, such as:

- Motherhood
- The feminine
- The domestic
- Art practices
- Community engagement
- Inclusion/exclusion
- Social construction

Impacts have included:

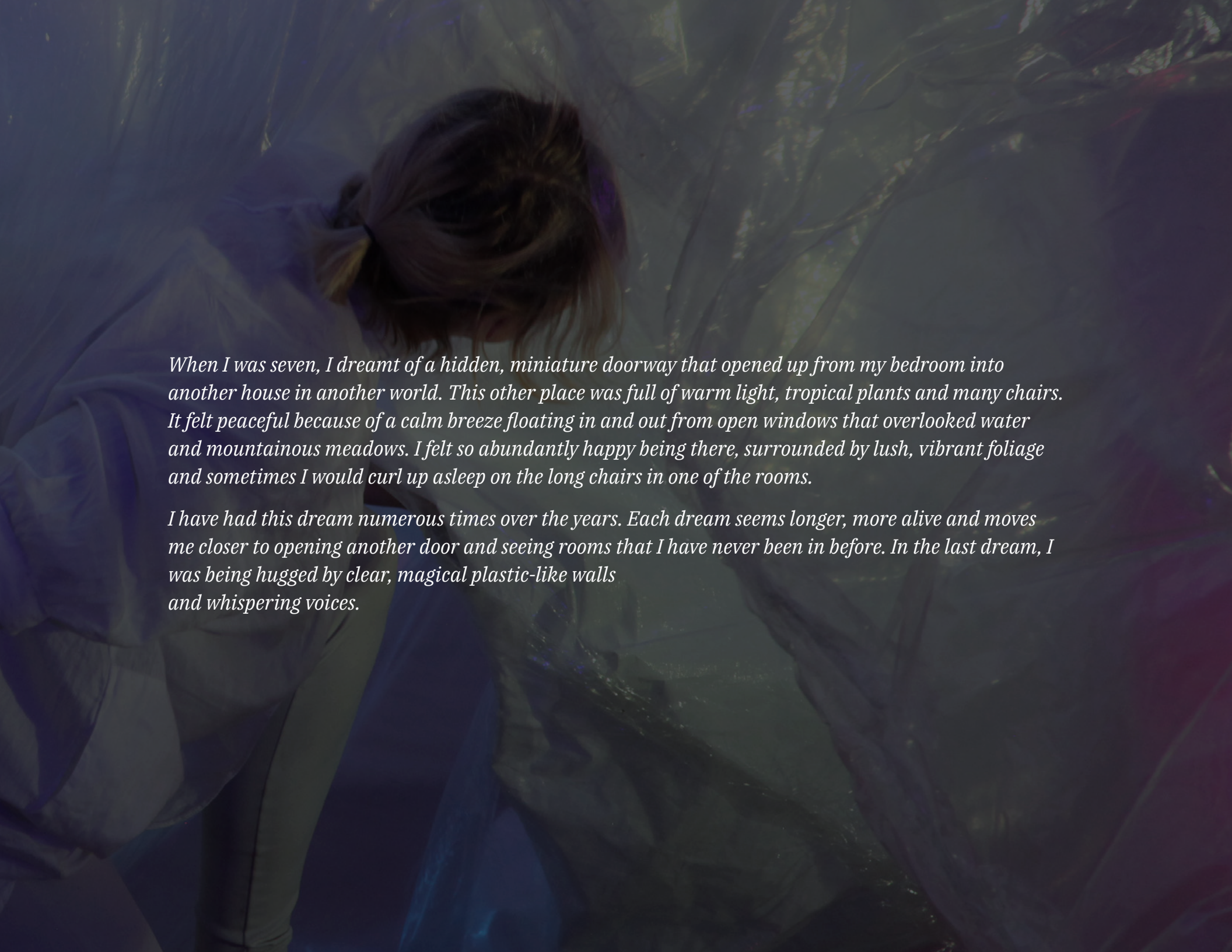
- Resulting discussions including women's voices who didn't want to be categorized as distinctly “woman” artists
- Questions arising around “woman” and “womanhood”
- Community engagement in the DTES
- Its inclusion in a dissertation—launching into the realm of academia, and future sources!

PS: Do you have any other thoughts, reflections, or comments that you would like to share with me?

LTF: The exhibition was a really meaningful way for me to move through my grief and use all that knowledge, feeling, and creativity to create something, which to me is the very nature of the feminine and art, creation.

INTERLUDE

*Recurring Dreams
of In-Betweens*



When I was seven, I dreamt of a hidden, miniature doorway that opened up from my bedroom into another house in another world. This other place was full of warm light, tropical plants and many chairs. It felt peaceful because of a calm breeze floating in and out from open windows that overlooked water and mountainous meadows. I felt so abundantly happy being there, surrounded by lush, vibrant foliage and sometimes I would curl up asleep on the long chairs in one of the rooms.

I have had this dream numerous times over the years. Each dream seems longer, more alive and moves me closer to opening another door and seeing rooms that I have never been in before. In the last dream, I was being hugged by clear, magical plastic-like walls and whispering voices.



Figure 46. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #7, 2020.

4.3 Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between

Medium

60-minute Live performance, 2-channel projection

Locations

Pandora Park Fieldhouse and Gold Saucer Studios, Vancouver BC

Materials

Plastic, various weight and size, costume, smartphone, camera, 2 AAXA Pico projectors, voice, microphone, amp, cords, vacuum, electronic pedals

Collaborators

Luciana D'Anunção, Meghan Rosner

Photography

Reese Muntean

Link

<https://prophecysun.com/Magical-Beast>



This section discusses *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between (2017)*, a live movement and sound performance and two-channel audio and video installation, which was shown in the festival, Dance in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios on November 17, 2017. The piece was collectively shaped with co-creators Luciana D'Anunção and Meghan Rosner. The piece was curated by Deanna Peters (Mutable Subject) and co-curated by dance artists Carolina Bergonzoni, Jeanette Kotowich and Kevin Fraser. The DIY@DIV event was co-organized with dance artist Rianne Svelnis and multimedia artist Ahmed Khalil.

This artwork explores notions of Carriance as evidenced through collaboratively shaped research processes, choreography, costume making, videography, fabrication of inflatable forms and through exploratory live performance with artists Luciana D'Anunção and Meghan Rosner. I include this project because it attends to notions of care that stretch beyond maternal care and to ground my labour and experiences of co-creating, performing for an intimate audience and the challenges that arose whilst juggling two little ones.

This artwork takes up all the three theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism, the Optical Unconscious, and the Technological Unconscious. This research also takes up the subtheme of Dreams—sensations, images, ideas and emotions that occur during sleep. These arrangements parallel aspects of the previous artworks, *Traces of Motherhood (2016)* and *Domestic Cupboards (2017)*, in so much as the works showcase intimate experiences and relationships, everyday moments, and try to recapture meaning through movement using portable and accessible technologies and live performance. However, this artwork builds on those experiences and explores dream-like sensorial movement and sound with a larger-than-life inflatable form.

The following pages discuss the artwork and present aspects of Carriance through archival digital ephemera, which take up live performance documentation, a reflection, curatorial interview text, process photographs and video stills, sketches, the festival call, and submission text.

Previous page: Figure 47. prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção, Magical Beast, 2017. Live performance view courtesy of Reese Muntean.

4.3.1 DIY@DIV Performance Documentation: November 17, 2017



Figure 48. *prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção, Magical Beast, 2017. Live performance view courtesy of Reese Muntean.*



Figure 49. prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção, *Magical Beast*, 2017. Live performance view courtesy of Reese Muntean.



Figure 50. *prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção, Magical Beast, 2017. Live performance view courtesy of Reese Muntean.*

4.3.2 Reflection

When I think about sound or movement loops. I'm there with you in real time. It's not a bunch of information that you've gathered, then you've condensed and compressed into a product and then you share that with me and then I'm kind of lost because I have no idea. That's a statement as opposed to an experience. So, I think about that and how that rigour of exposing how things build up and the process of getting to somewhere actually led me into what it is you're doing so that there's this communication that's happening. So, in a very crude way, I know the rules, I'm learning the rules, you're sharing with me, and they're not... In all of their abstraction, they're not invisible but made more visible (Deanna Peters Interview, 2020).

In the above excerpt, DIY@DIV curator Deanna Peters reminds us about the importance of exposing audiences to process and communicating about the rules and what is happening in a performance as essential and purposeful acts of care (Peters Interview, 2020). In particular, she suggests how audiences need to be brought along in a journey for the performance to matter (Peters). Care considered this way implies many dimensions of care and affective and relational engagement.

The following pages consider these ideas and how moving images, sound, technologies, bodies, performance and process documentation open up the term Carriance by providing viewers with unique insight into the making of the artwork *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017), a 60-minute live movement and sound performance and two-channel audio and video installation. The piece was shown in the festival, Dance

in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios on November 17, 2017. I also draw attention to the relationships formed with co-creators Luciana D'Anunção and Meghan Rosner in the making of the artwork. I further attend to notions of Carriance by highlighting aspects of an interview I had with Deanna Peters about the experimental format of the final performance event.

The Cinematic Space

For most of human history, images were still, motionless, absent of breath and motion. The birth of the first motion picture forever changed our relationship to images. Tom Gunning points out how our relationships to the cinematic spectacle are complex and often merge uncanny visualizations of public and private events. For example, he writes about a myth where audiences left in terror after witnessing the first screening of the Lumiere Brothers film *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* in 1895 (Gunning, 1995). However, in contrast, he proposes that the first projection exhibitions (moving images) caused audiences to feel shocked as they witnessed an uncanny and agitating occurrence (Gunning, 1995). I mention this to draw attention to the impact that live performance, theatre, films and other events have had on our perceptual understanding of time and place. Importantly, I argue that these experiences have changed how we mitigate, and care for our relationships with our surroundings, and each other.

Gunning proposes that the birth of cinematic works changed the narrative discourse and impacted spectatorship threefold: 1) the design of cinematic theaters evolved into an artwork of effects; 2) theatre spaces grew into a succession of attractions where people could experience otherness, culture and escape the everyday; and 3) theatres became destination spots for attraction, distraction, absorption or immersion (Gunning, 1995). Gunning's ideas are a useful lens to consider the historical importance of the invention of projection exhibitions, and how it changed spectatorship from one of passive viewing and replaced it with a smorgasbord of mediated experiences. In this way and more, I argue that the cinematic space has become a place for cultural seekers to find and experience otherness through a succession of

voyeuristic, sensual illusions.

Cinematic spaces are immersive, complex, and awaken audiences to alternative states of consciousness. For instance, spectators feel various levels of sensory engagement which helps shape how they view, hear or feel a work. Cinematic spaces are also a place of care and involve many levels of Carriance. Arguably, I see these environments as temporal, tied up with vast amounts of technological gear, films, audio equipment that need someone to touch, shape, update and carry out its interactions and instructions. These spaces often involve many unseen hours or labour, caretaking, materials, and people. Importantly, Carriance helps to shape how we encounter, see, feel and understand our relationships to each other, to other bodies, technology and beyond. Cinematic spaces then are spaces of spectacle, care, and timely occurrences.

Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst articulate how the development of theatrical spaces changed how audiences perceived cultural space and their behaviours shifted as cinematic spaces developed (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1999). This is important to note because cinematic spaces and telecommunication systems are used as tools to extend our gaze and perception beyond—amplifying our mind and transcending our bodies into unpredictable configurations of creativity (Ascott and Shanken, 2003, 235-36).

Magical Beast

Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between (2017) is a 60-minute live movement and sound performance and two-channel audio and video installation, which was shown in the festival, Dance in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios on November 17, 2017. The piece draws inspiration from this rich cinematic legacy, and, in particular, aligns with Carolee Schneemann and Yvonne Rainer's interdisciplinary ideas on human bodies, space and abstract performances in front of the camera (Foerschner and Rivenc, 2018).

This interdisciplinary artwork attends to notions of care by

creating dynamic, delicate and temporal sequences of sound and movement that weave throughout the gallery space (see Fig. 47-50). For instance, as the performance unfolds, the audience is engaged or encouraged to touch, push, pull, carry and/or lift the Beast away from their bodies. Eventually as the piece closes, the Beast deflates, and I enter inside the form while I fade out the vocal sounds.

Much in the spirit of Fluxus, and Happenings (performance scores), *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017) stems from my interest in live performance with both semi-structured and emergent actions in

the everyday. Similar to other pieces mentioned in this document, such as *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) and *Carrying Others* (2019), this piece takes up flâneuse and posthumanist approaches to creative expression. For example, the piece weaves together objects, people, sound, spaces, and technologies in immersive ways that inherently move, care for, liberate and co-evolve together.

This artwork highlights elements of Carriance through collaborative processes, material investigations and through sonic modes and forms. For example, the piece was collectively made with Luciana D'Anuniação and Meghan Rosner. Luciana D'Anuniação and I co-created the movement choreography, costume and video work. I created the sound composition and performed the piece live with both choreographic and improvised movement scores. Meghan Rosner fabricated the beast—a larger-than-life inflatable form—out of an assorted mix of plastic and synthetic material strips (see Fig. 49). It is also important to note that this artwork shifted as we engaged in collaborative experiments in the rehearsal spaces and when we tried new choreography with technologies. For instance, instead of just being a form that would lie flat for audience members to touch, The Beast became another lifeform with an ability to move through the space and disappear when inflated or deflated.

Another example of Carriance is evidenced in the sound composition which was created and performed live with a looping pedal, amp, microphone, smartphone and processed voice. I

created the composition by beginning with a land acknowledgement, the soundscape built over time and became a provocation of rippling water, looping breath, and healing tones. Much like the sound, the movement was chanceful, full of unknown sets of encounters that took time to unfold. Upon reflection, the experiments created new ways of engagement, between bodies, systems and environments. As Peter's suggests:

There was this openness and this fluidity to the idea of just the expectation from the audience of what it meant to come and be a part of this performance. And I think through this kind of taking the time that it took and not putting this artificial sense of rigor or something over it that... I remember it feeling like a living room, how everyone was sitting and engaging. And strangers were talking, everyone started talking with each other and we took care of ourselves. I just felt like there was this sense of unfolding (Peters).

As the piece took place over the span of an hour, the feel of a "living room" environment and atmosphere encouraged participants to take their time and care for themselves and others while engaging in the performance. As evidenced in Peter's excerpt, the pace of the performance and the way that the piece was laid out created a relaxed atmosphere that invited conversation and moments of care between the audience members. Eventually, the rhythm of the performance changed from my actions of moving slowly and meditatively with the Beast, to more forceful and directive actions where the Beast was pushed into the audience's bodies (see Fig. 48). Arguably, the immersive and relaxed environmental qualities, created by the engagement with the materials and the sonic performance, both aided and extended the spectators' level of perception beyond their limbs and eyes, and into calmer places.

As in the earlier sections, I include interview text, preparatory documentation of the performance, in particular, process images from of making the Beast, to highlight the variable and impactful moments of collaboration and Carriance—at the developmental

and production stages. I suggest that this ephemera shows traces of Carriance and how important each aspect of the work was to the next part. Indeed, the poetics of the work are meshed, and cannot only be attributed to the final work and performance as each element in the making was equally necessary, weighted, and considered in the collective making. Moreover, the piece imbues traces of care and reciprocity throughout, which complicates and/or expands how viewers relate to the performance both in situ and here in this dissertation.

Throughout this document, I include and advocate for the inclusion of ephemera such as these process images because they attend to the collaborative processes, and attest to the life of performance beyond the form, text, and experience. What I mean is that traces such as photographs of a performance provide dynamic insight into a past, temporal moment. In this sense, the use of technological apparatus, installation techniques, sound amplification, movement and costumes have provided us with space to view these temporal traces.

As in earlier sections, I have included interview text, process images and scores to showcase the site-specific nature of the experiments, movement and sound expressions using a myriad of technological systems and devices. Each of these elements highlight the importance of the Carriance and collaborative process. For example, in the making of the Beast, I worked collectively with Rosner and D'Anunção to build the inflatable form over multiple sessions (see Fig. 52-57). We each supported and held each other up during the process. We built a cohesive language together where one of us would tape while the other held or cut parts of the extra plastic skin off. I would schedule, shop for materials, procure fabric or other materials, pick up and drive us all to various destinations across the city. Rosner and D'Anunção also filled the gap when I was unable to participate in tasks. For example, when I was nursing Haakens and or tending to my children's needs, D'Anunção would take the lead. And, due to health considerations and the proximity of danger to my children, Rosner, would orchestrate and perform the labour of chemical

spraying or the applications of toxic glue or other substances either offsite or away from me and the children. We tried different ways of moving with the form in an indoor environment and then experimented with the shape outdoors. We also collectively performed tasks such as taking photos, video and creating aspects of the choreographic movement and then later uploading content to shared folders for future editing etc. In this way, we each carried and held each other throughout the process of making (see Fig. 51-57). Carriance as expressed in these examples is both essential

and intuitively embodied, and actioned.

Carriance thus, as both an action and method, provides us with an immersive and embodied approach to creative practice. Building on these ideas of care, sonic traces and collective experiments and cinematic experiences, the next section introduces *Hunting Self* (2018-19), a 15-channel, 60-minute sound installation that demonstrates a range of sensorial and creative approaches to sound composition.

4.3.3 DIY@DIV Call: September 1, 2017

DIY@DIV at Gold Saucer Studios

We have the space, do you have the remedy?

Are you engaged with expanding notions around dance, choreography, performance?

Are you searching for experimental models to present your work?

Do you want to engage your communities and grow audiences around your work and dance for all?

Do you have skills and energy to contribute to new inclusive spaces for your and others' work?

Are you searching for ways to share your projects on your own terms?

Do you like to host a great party?

DIY@DIV is an initiative by dance artist and DIY/indie producer Deanna Peters/Mutable Subject, co-organized with dance artist Rianne Svelnis and multimedia artist Ahmed Khalil. The DIY@DIV artists will be selected/co-curated by dance artists Carolina Bergonzoni, Jeanette Kotowich and Kevin Fraser. We see many opportunities for dance beyond traditional 'marketplace' models and we have resources to share!

DIY@DIV is an opportunity for 4 movement-based artists/artist groups, from any form or stage in their career, to share current work, to put their indie producer chops to use and to work with and support each other. Running November 22–25, 2017, each artist/group will have one date to share their work, but bringing DIY@DIV to audiences will be a group effort, with selected artists, supported by event organizers and curators, contributing their skills and resources to their own, as well as to each other's events.

DIY@DIV will provide performance/rehearsal/community space. Limited technical support can be negotiated (access to some lights, projector, projection screen and basic sound equipment). The curated artists will bring their artistic work, as well as guide event planning, organizing, promoting and hosting. Audiences will gain access to engaging live art at affordable prices, with 100% of profits from all four shows being divided equally between the four curated projects. Each show will feature a social event, shaped around the unique desires/interests of the artist(s), for conversation and opportunities to meet someone new!

Organized alongside The Dance Centre's Dance In Vancouver biennale, DIY@DIV offers even more opportunities to see what's going on in the Vancouver dance scene and beyond. Let's hang out, learn from and be with each other!

Applications are due Sep 5, 2017, 11:59pm PST. All applicants will be notified by Sep 15, 2017, 11:59pm PST.

4.3.4 DIY@DIV Submission: September 05, 2017

project author(s)

prOphecy sun and Luciana Freire D'Anunciação

Please list all project artists/collaborators, including name(s), role(s) + website url(s) *

prOphecy sun and Luciana Freire D'Anunciação—dancers, choreographers, installation artists, musicians.

Meghan Rosner—prop design and Installation assistant.

Please describe the work you'd like to share as a part of DIY@DIV *

Magical beast: the space within, out, and in between, 120 minutes. Live performance, 2017.

For this year's DIY@DIV the artists Sun and D'Anunciação propose to create Magical beast: the space within, out, and in between, a 2-hour performative installation exploring notions of time and space, recurring and suspended imagery, and expanding and contracting breath arrangements using an amorphous 6" X 6" X 6" mylar, skin-like inflatable object. The score will focus on pre-recorded and live vocal compositions using breath, tones in minimal mixed and looping patterns to fill the space, alongside light, fluid and floaty improvised movement sequences centered around collectively massaging the inflatable object together.

Planned duration, in minutes *

Approximately 120 minutes total.

Please describe the desired audience configuration for your proposed project, or speak to how you intend to engage with audiences at your show? * Your answer:

Magical Beast: the Space Within, Out, and in Between, is a durational performative piece. We will move, dance, and vocalize throughout the space. We will encourage audience members to move, sit, and stand in response to these actions. We will also invite audience members to join us in massaging the inflatable object.

What sort of technical requirements do you require? Which of these are you able to provide, if any? *

Power source, PA or amplification. We will also require sharp contrast lighting. We could alternatively provide an amp.

Please provide link(s) to media (video, audio, etc.) of your proposed project, current project research or previous work. Please briefly describe how this media applies to your proposal. *

prOphecy sun's current/previous research links: <https://vimeo.com/125941289>.

Luciana Freire D'Anunciação's current/previous research links:<https://lucianaf.com/portfolio/an-empty-house-full-of-air/>

The provided links reference our present and previous works that combine improvised movement, sound and inflatables.

Briefly outline your history of performance producing, including any skills you've developed and would like to contribute:

prOphecy sun's interdisciplinary performance practice threads together both conscious and unconscious choreographies, sound, and environment, to create exploratory works that invoke deep body memory, celebrating where art and life are inseparable, and inexhaustibly overlapped. Her doctoral research takes up these ideas alongside what theorist Jane Bennett calls vibrant objects, across thresholds, into domestic geographies, considering how the maternal body responds to the agency of things in the world. She has a blackbelt in Kickboxing, training in dance improvisation, butoh, contact improvisation and somatic dance practices. Over the last 9 years she has been self-releasing music, choreography, compositions and videos using smartphone technology as a capturing tool. She has exhibited and performed nationally and internationally at the Surrey Art Gallery, One Art Space, L'alternative: Festival de Cine Independiente de Barcelona, Festival Miden, Unit/Pitt Gallery, IAC Gallery (Berlin), Institut für Alles Mögliche, Cinethesia Feminist Film Festival, Orillia Museum of Art and History, Push Festival, Fazakas Gallery, VIVO Media Arts Centre, ISEA 2015, DIS 2014, the Vancouver Art Gallery, Dancing on the Edge, Scotia Bank Dance Centre, 12 Min Max, Fontanelle Gallery, the Vancouver International Jazz Festival, the International Experimental Cinema Explosion, Exploding Cinema Festival, Festival des Musiques Creation, and the International Festival of Live Networked Performances.

Luciana Freire D'Anunciação is a Brazilian artist who develops interdisciplinary works with dance, theatre, video, installation and sound, which have been exhibited/performed around the globe in such as the Brazilian Dance Festival (Recife, PE-2017/2016), Galeria Peras del Olmo (Buenos Aires, AR 2016), Vizualeyez Festival (Edmonton, Canada), Performance biennale Deformes (Santiago, Chile -2014), Festival Europeu de Performance Art (Poland-2011). D'Anunciação's works have as a starting point her own perceptive system, and, from there the possible relations she can build with the world and the other socially, politically, and playfully. She has an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies from SFU and training in dance improvisation, somatic dance practices, butoh, contact improvisation, and physical theatre. D'Anunciação currently is back to the city of Vancouver for a residency with Dance Troupe Practice as part of Vancouver Parks Fieldhouse Residency from the Vancouver City board of Parks and Recreation.

4.3.5 Project Log

4.3.5.1 The Making: September 16, 2017–November 16, 2017

Magical Beast Preliminary Sketches: September 16, 2017

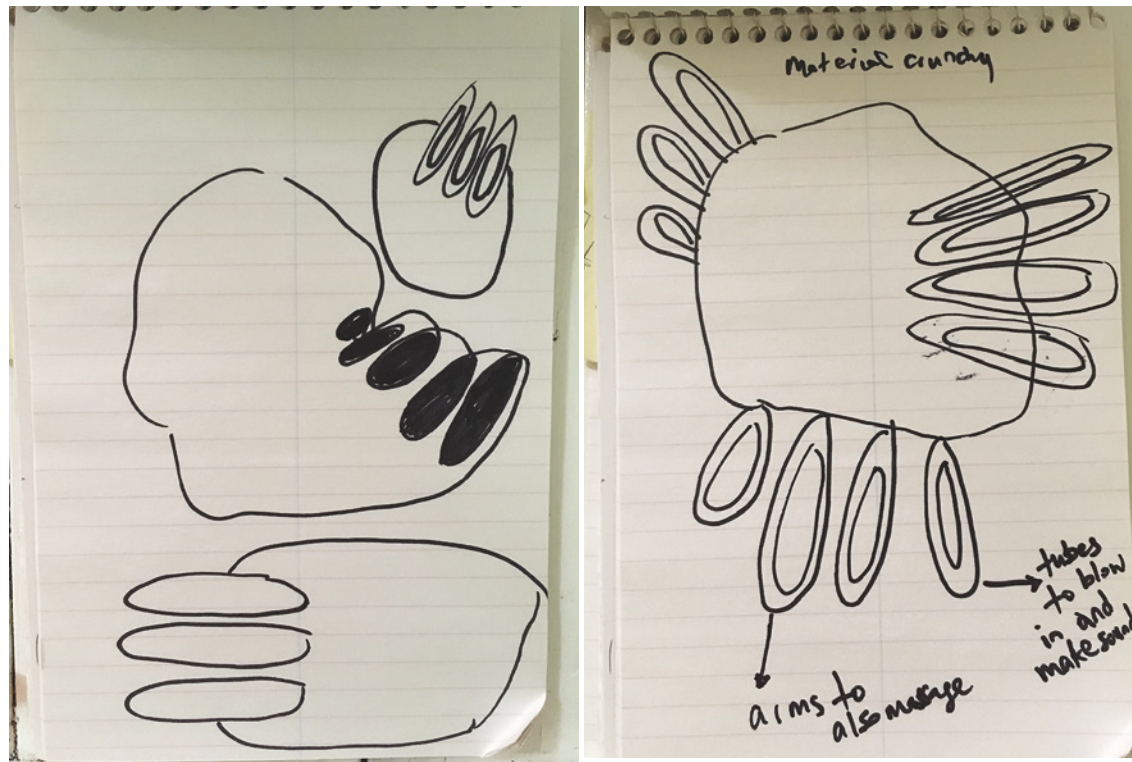


Figure 51. prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção, *Magical Beast*, 2017. Preliminary sketches of the Beast.

4.3.5.2 The Making: Curator Meeting: September 28, 2017



Figure 52. *prOphecy sun* and *Luciana D'Anunção*, meeting at *Gold Saucer Studios* with the *DIY@DIV* Curator, *Deanna Peters*.

4.3.5.3 The Making: Magical Beast Building at the Pandora Park Fieldhouse: October 15, 2017



Figure 53. prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção. The making at Pandora Park Fieldhouse with Meghan Rosner.

4.3.5.4 The Making: Magical Beast Building at the Templeton Community Centre: October 29, 2017



Figure 54. prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunciação. The making at Templeton Community Center with Meghan Rosner.

4.3.5.5 The Making: Magical Beast Building at the Templeton Community Centre: November 06, 2017



Figure 55. *prOphecy sun* and Luciana D'Anunção. The making at Templeton Community Center with Meghan Rosner.



Figure 56. *prOphecy sun* and Luciana D'Anunção. *The making* at Templeton Community Center with Meghan Rosner.



Figure 57. *prOphecy sun* and *Luciana D'Anunciação*. The making at Templeton Community Center with Meghan Rosner.

4.3.6 Curatorial Conversation with Deanna Peters: August 06, 2020

Curator and producer Deanna Peters and I spoke over the phone in the summer of 2020 to discuss the performative installation, *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between* (2017) which was included in Dance in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) 2017 programming at Gold Saucer studios. Peters was one of the curators of the event. Peters (AKA Mutable Subject), is a creator, performer, producer and designer for the stage, screen, web, print and DIY spaces. She resides on the ancestral and unceded xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh and səliilíwətaʔ territories (Vancouver).

It is important to note that Peters and I have performed in parallel events, festivals and presented material in unique and unconventional ways. However, until this production, we had never created together. I am a fan of her work and see much kinship in her direct approach to movement and how she nourishes her aesthetic sensibilities by mixing mediums, roles and authorship. The following text is from an edited transcription that describes our collaboration, and our reflections on artmaking, feminism, and performing both inside and outside of institutional models.

prOphecy sun (PS): How did you select *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between* for the DIY@DIV 2017 show?

We selected *Magical Beast* for DIY@DIV with this idea of “we have the space; you have the remedy.” I was sort of extrapolating for my DIY producing practice into this idea and changing accepted ideas of dance that happens in Vancouver. And it sounds like it's this all-encompassing thing, *Dance in Vancouver*, but it's missing out on so much of what's actually happening in dance in Vancouver. And it just has a very narrow focus. So, I guess for a lot of my questions, they end up being kind of reactionary sometimes. I just always feel like I question ideas like, “who are you to call it dance?” And, “who are you to call it in Vancouver?”

PS: Deanna, who are the “we” in the selection? And, what is that context referring too?

DP: The “we” I am talking about is listed in the call as well, but it was my initiative. But then I felt like I had already curated Interplay and that was just me, and I've had questions around that sometimes, like, how does that look like, or what are the optics around that. And a lot of it has to do with just the swiftness with which I can make decisions and make things happen, and that direct relationship that I can have with people. But also, I was interested in these performing arts curation meetups quite a bit. And I was interested in this idea of curation in the performing arts. So, in the spirit of it being more of a collaborative process, I invited Carolina Bergonzoni, Jeanette Kotowich and Kevin Fraser to co-curate with me. And that was experimental in itself, to bring them along into this. They're also burgeoning ideas around curation, but also so that if I'm inviting works from outside the mainstream of Dance in Vancouver, I also felt like I wanted to invite practitioners who were operating in these communities, that would be the ones that would not be included in these ideas of Dance in Vancouver. For example, Carolina does a lot with all bodies dance, and I had communicated with her in other means around her work there, and what that means in terms of being inclusive in dance for differently abled bodies. And, Jeanette was coming from a contemporary dance background and Indigenous worldview. And Kevin was coming from a street club dance background. So, I wanted to include them in that.

PS: Something that's coming to the surface as I'm writing is how all of the works that I've made have been extremely collaborative on every level. For example, I see our collaborations with *Magical Beast* as a partnership, or more specifically as a way of working together. I feel like we pull each other up and support each other in ways that sometimes aren't as obvious. For *Magical Beast*, I was also collaborating with

Luciana D’Anunção, and Meghan Rosner to create a unique piece that included the build of a gigantic inflatable shape. I also see collaborations as a feminist practice and a sensibility that encourages ways of working with others, and bringing others into a project, instead of it just being all about a solo opportunity.

DP: The values I have around my creative process are also represented in this idea of sharing resources and DIY producing, as I am concerned with the possibilities. For the call, I wanted people to see that there were opportunities, resources, and possibilities for them to share on their own terms. And again, it’s still coming from a deep desire for me to have those spaces. I’ve also learned in reading Anne Bogart, that that’s how you access the collective—by analyzing yourself and listening to yourself and your own desires. As opposed to trying to create for a perceived audience, or this is what the audience wants. But that’s what I hear a lot from producers or presenters in dance. But I don’t believe that. I just don’t believe that those should be the things governing decision makers. But also, as much as it’s collaborative, I also wanted to empower people to feel like they had the ability to do it themselves and to bring all the skills that they already have to the floor. And ultimately, it is about eliminating the need for these middle people, or the gatekeepers, the bureaucracy, institution, whatever you want to call it. I feel like it’s empowering to know that you can just get the grant, or you can take the courses from the door, and you can put on the shows for yourself. Not just that it was collaborative, it was like, we’re not going to do it for you. It’s not this relationship where we provide you with a fee or whatever. We’re going to share risk. We’re going to share costs. Ultimately, it was for people who were interested in creating all of the spaces around their work.

PS: What was the theme and format of the show?

DP: It was to expand the idea of what is dance, because it’s not just white Eurocentric dance. And it was really about that and also to resist the lack of transparency in Vancouver’s dance scene. I’ve always wondered why there’s not more OFF ideas, around festivals in Vancouver.

PS: I remember we had proposed an hour-long performance. And then it evolved, once we came into the space and started rehearsing. I was also juggling Haakens, who was quite small at the time. And Luciana’s role changed because of other commitments so we kind of switched some of our intended roles, which was really kind of exciting too.

PS: How important was new media perspectives, artwork or any other kind of presentation of the body important to frame/form the theme of what you had intended for the show to be?

DP: I would say that it was what the artists brought. So, if they brought new, that’s what they brought.

PS: I felt that you were bringing an entrepreneurial way of approaching dance outside of the institution. Having a space where others could explore.

DP: I call it indie because I feel like we already have a grasp of what that means in music and film. So “Why don’t we put that in dance?” That’s essentially what it is. I feel like its indie dance. Indie. That’s the word I would use, I guess to answer that question. That new media as an invitation with no kind of limitation put on, other than the fact that it was not a theater space or a high production value space. But if somebody wanted to use media, I was like, “Yeah, go for it. You just need to figure out how you’re going to use it.” So, it wasn’t necessarily part of the show. I mean, not part of the concept of the event.

PS: For you, is there a link between creative work and data? If so, what?

DP: Yeah, because so much of my dance practice has been very analog, I look a lot at people using media, people using video projection in a theater space or whatever. And I look at it and I've really kind of analyzed it as a trope, like, "What is it that is so engaging for people with this?" And then I've tried to create that in an analog way. I've tried to look at the effects, the perceptual shifts or whatever it is. And then I've tried to sort of be like, "Okay, so how can I transpose that to my body? How can I transpose that to physical space? How can I put that back into a space that isn't a screen or isn't media driven?" Because also, I've always sort of sensed that at a certain point, the performance or that the physical became subservient to the actual limitations of the media.

PS: I don't like having limitations when it comes to how to express things, but often technologies will create them. And it's how I can adapt with, or without those things. And when you're talking, I like to experiment with my creative practice in ways that challenges me. And also, I'm aware, as an audience member, as a spectator, as well as being a performer or... I feel like I'm trying to engage on multiple levels of what this quote unquote, "technological or environmental relationship" I'm having with the space I'm performing in, with the audience, with the technology or non-technology of what I'm doing. And so again, I kind of liken that to also a very feminist sensibility of being able to recognize that it's not just your body, it's also your lived experiences, the light in the room, the how somebody's breathing at the other side of a space or how I'm breathing. I feel it's very interconnected. When I'm thinking about creative work and data, they're very inseparable. Because they kind of feed off of each other.

When you're talking about analog and digital, I think about experimental ways of approaching and engaging with my whole being, whether that's sight, sound, sonic, all of these different potentialities and seeing how I can create something. But this idea of data and creative work, I feel

sometimes you're saying artists can push limits in a performance. I feel like there are opportunities to try something different. And I mean, for example, at *Gold Saucer*, I don't know if you remember, there were all those lights that you had in the storage crates?

DP: Yes.

PS: When we were rehearsing, we started fiddling around with all them and it changed the way the whole piece looked and felt. For example, it made the inflatable just beautiful. It looked like water skin. It just transformed it. Talking about creative work and data, do you see any other relationships?

DP: In terms of data, I am really into metadata. Because there's just so much information that doesn't get shared of, that everything's happening behind closed doors. I really do feel like abstraction for me is really, the only possibility, in terms, with... And not, I don't mean abstraction as an art movement, with a big "A", but I just mean being beside something, being... Taking a step like the uncanny valley, I'm really into that, as it's so close to this thing. So, I feel like this is all related to this idea of metadata, which I relate to through my web practice and I extrapolate and transpose into dance, what is the metadata of dance? Sweat is actually a metadata of fuel, of physical performance, physical practice and materiality that I like to work with. So, I feel like all of this stuff is data.

PS: Yes. And I agree with you. I have made a lot of decisions as an artist and mother and that also changed my relationship to my performing body, and to space. I see data as all of these things that are around us, like materiality. I feel like it informs every decision that I make. And that's why I was thinking about audiences and as a performer, but also as somebody that has a larger eye than just as a person that's performing. I really see that in the work that you produce and perform. You have a unique vantage point about what else is happening around you. And that was one of the reasons why I really was excited to work with you and with everybody else in the show. I feel like creating *Magical Beast* was a real

organic way of approaching where I was at in my life, as a mother and as a creative practitioner.

PS: How important is the relationship between the artist and the curator or the artist and the producer?

DP: I understand theoretically the idea of a relationship between an artist and a curator, but I have never really felt like I have been curated in dance. I have hosted performing arts curation meetups, because there's a lot of academic literature, around it, like Claire Bishop or these sorts of things. But there's not a lot of practice, at least in our region. And I know a lot of visual arts curators. And so, I've talked to them, too, about these practices.

For DIY@DIV, I just wanted there to be some sort of relationship, where it was a negotiation or an invitation to present work. It went beyond that, to a conversation, a call and response. The idea of care, it's so literal, but that was part of it. And for me, to practice saying yes, because I had just heard no so many times, or in many different ways, in terms of how I wanted to produce my own work. So, I felt like the collaborative relationship is really important, but it's also about, and the work is in there too, in that relationship, which I feel like it's something other than the relationship between the artist and the curator. The artist can feel a certain way about the space. And that is one thing but then there's the work, too. So, what's going to serve the work? And so, I feel that's also part of it.

PS: I agree with you about relationships being a negotiation and how they develop into more of a call and response. Also, on what you said about what serves the artwork. I feel a lot of gratitude sometimes when curators, producers, and gallery assistants care and sensibilities when it comes to things like keeping sound on for an artwork instead of just turning it off.

PS: Do feminist artists change the show spectatorship and if so, do their interests, process or artworks change the viewership?

DP: Yes. In particular with your piece, there was a sense of fluidity

in terms of time. Things just needed to take the time that they took, and you needed to do the things that you needed to do to be ready. So, there was this sense of witnessing things unfold. I guess I go back to this idea of Meta, as the audience was present or still arriving. I remember that and there were things happening. So, it wasn't this cold, rigid statement necessarily. There was this openness and this fluidity to the idea of just the expectation from the audience of what it meant to come and be a part of this performance. And I think through this kind of taking the time that it took and not putting this artificial sense of rigor or some thing over it that... I remember it feeling like a living room, how everyone was sitting and engaging. And strangers were talking, everyone started talking with each other and we took care of ourselves. I just felt like there was this sense of unfolding. So that's an interesting metaphor in terms of offering the space, but then not controlling or helicoptering how we were behaving so that people just became really friendly and organic and everyone was so happy. I don't know if you remember that, or how everyone was so dreamy and quiet, but also seeing each other. I don't know if you remember that, but I just remember feeling like wow, that was just such a pleasant environment.

And then how the work also kept that sense of openness. Say when, and where the beast went, and how it engulfed us and came to us. So, in theater speak, they would say, "The fourth wall was broken," you know? And so, it was dismantled, or it was just ignored, which I feel takes a lot of rigour to practice that, to do that as not just an aesthetic. It does. I feel it takes a lot of rigour to drop those unspoken expectations or rules that like, where do they come from? And it puts us in touch with our agency, I feel like. We discovered what our boundaries were open, and you made space for all of us to explore, what it was in that space. You know?

PS: Yes, thank you. I love the idea of the audience being part of the performance, being there with us, being engaged and feeling like they have agency and they could make decisions. For example, I was pushing the inflatable beast towards

certain bodies and I was seeing how they would respond and some would push back or have the person beside them kind of almost care-take the person that was beside them, by pushing it away or bringing it closer to them. I liked that. I liked the engagement that was happening and yes, it was a very slow process to build the piece with the audience. It just needed the time to build to do the things that it did, everything from starting with making a sound, a land acknowledgement, then moving from that into a soundscape that had to build because working with loops, it takes a while to build where the sound will start. And then the same thing had to happen with this engagement with my body and this inflatable form, this creature that was in the space laying very alive, but very prone and then coming and engaging with it and touching it very lightly and softly and then our two bodies eventually morphing into one body by the very end of the performance, where I actually entered to be inside the shape. And so, yeah, it took time, but it also felt like time stretched and also disappeared while I was performing. I feel like that happens a lot in performances. I still have a clock going in my head of approximately where I am, but I also feel so very captured by what's going on and how people were giggling or talking and feeling like I wanted to engage more so it was pushing or standing over things and people and bodies and trying to push it into the roof if you will.

I really enjoyed performing with that shape because it was so big and there were points where I was trying to encourage it to deflate by massaging it more and trying things to make it deflate faster. But I felt like the audience was having a good time with it too, so I didn't feel that I needed to push anything too much. The piece seemed to organically move forward when it needed to.

Does this idea of a feminist sensibility resonate with you? I'm always curious because I'm realizing that there is a level of care and consideration to people, to spaces, to objects, whether it's bacteria, just this consideration and, I don't know, mothering has kind of woken me up to some of that more.

DP: Yes. I would say it definitely does. So, this dance is not about. Like, "This dance is about environmentalism," and I'm just like, "Really?" Because A, I can't control the gaze or the perception of the multitude of audience. And so there's, I feel like this really misogynistic and that's like the big A in abstraction or modernism kind of view of controlling the gaze and if you don't get what my intention was, then you weren't smart enough to get this work and I feel like that happens a lot. But also, I feel it just reveals this lack of interest in understanding how the form, and I'm talking about dance works or how it can function. So, I feel like it also is related to a bit of an assumption or laziness on things other than themselves.

PS: It's almost like a passivity of sorts. I always think about that with technology, people expecting something to show something to them versus actually an engagement that happens, a reciprocal engagement.

DP: Yeah. After reading Susan Sontag, I decided that I am against dictating what the work is only about, and the interpretation and all of that. I did feel like we do a disservice to the form and the audience's ability to engage with it when we dictate what it is that they're supposed to be seeing and then we get complaints when the audience is dependent on that dictated information. And so now we're caught in this catch 22. "Well, the audience wants Romeo and Juliet." We're like, "Really?" just because we haven't really taking any risks or really had a point of view around what we wanted to do, how we want to operate within this form. And I feel like that's where the work of the choreographer begins in those design problems or those questions. I really am feeling this and how do I manifest that in space and time and physicality, as opposed to relying on being dependent on other media, say text or say video, that actually is what is relaying the narrative. It's

never been that related to that narrative, it's been the costuming or other indications, other symbols that have been the story, and it's never been the dance. And so, I feel like we've just continued to do it this disservice by wanting to link it to this basic narrative.

I feel you have to believe everybody's experience and I feel like it's our responsibility to care for when somebody has the braveness and the courage to come to me and say, "Well, I really saw this and this work," the worst thing you could do is say, "Oh that, you saw the wrong thing." I feel like you really have to listen, and you really have to believe what they've experienced and what they've seen. So that then informs as you move forward with that insight. So that's the research of performance and maybe research is a loaded word that we don't want to use because it indicates a whole other culture or something. But I do feel performance is research and that's when a lot of questions are answered.

PS: Do you see contemporary artists addressing current issues with technology and the climate, and or rethinking visibility and spectatorship? Or do you see any of that in *Magical Beast*?

DP: I feel like this durational aspect of making actually involves me in the process and so it releases this whole idea of needing a narrative or needing to get it because you have revealed, you have exposed what it is you're trying to do. So, when I think about sound or movement loops. I'm there with you in real time. It's not a bunch of information that you've gathered, then you've condensed and compressed into a product and then you share that with me and then I'm kind of lost because I have no idea. That's a statement as opposed to an experience. So, I think about that and how that rigour of exposing how things build up and the process of getting to somewhere actually led me into what it is you're doing so that there's this communication that's happening. So, in a very crude way, I know the rules, I'm learning the rules, you're sharing with me, and they're not... In all of their abstraction, they're not invisible but made more visible.

Yeah, so I think that is different than seeing something that's so product oriented or so finalized, even if really good research went into it and really good thought. But I'm just seeing the final and just seeing the result and I feel like that can be very un-dynamic.

PS: As a spectator, producer, curator and artist, when you're seeing something that is more dynamic or less produced, in which you're more involved in the creation of that piece as it's unfolding, do you feel more agency as being part of that then?

DP: Yeah. I feel more engaged. I'm not confused and I'm not asking myself... So even if I had expectations, I've been engaged and those drop away, and I forget about those and I'm having the experience and I'm vulnerable as much as they are. I feel like I'm quite conscious as a creator of being really careful about what's introduced and how, and about engagement.

PS: When I think about technology, I feel it can be impactful, help transport an audience somewhere else. But it can also be used as a passive tool. When I'm performing, I'm very in another realm and sometimes even though I'm very present and I'm trying to show what I'm doing, I don't want to separate out those things because I feel there's a magical space unseen and I want to bring the audience with me into this space—a considered space. But, I want them to also have agency and feelings in that space to be themselves and to experience what I'm experiencing at their own pace, in the same time, in real time.

PS: How did this show challenge institutional art practice and if so, how?

DP: I feel like it's about engagement with, with what's happening with culture, with an interest in what people are doing. I feel like it's not that hard to challenge the art practice. It's a matter of paying attention to language for example. I don't like to say that I practice so I say art dance and even that challenges the institution.

PS: Are there any other themes or ideas or reflections or impacts that have emerged for you from the show? Or anything else that you wanted to share or reflect on and do you have any other comments or anything like that that you'd like to ask me or share?

DP: I remember you saying that this was the first night that you were away from all of your children. Do you remember that?

PS: Yes. The performance time was a real challenge for me because it coincided with Owl and Haakens bedtime and that was going to be a difficult moment for my partner.

DP: Yeah. But it makes me think of this idea that when we perform, I feel like it's a mistake or an error or whatever to try to do something different. You know? I see people do this all the time. I work in intimately as an outside eye but see that performers can't just be themselves even just to cope. And I do feel like, what I felt

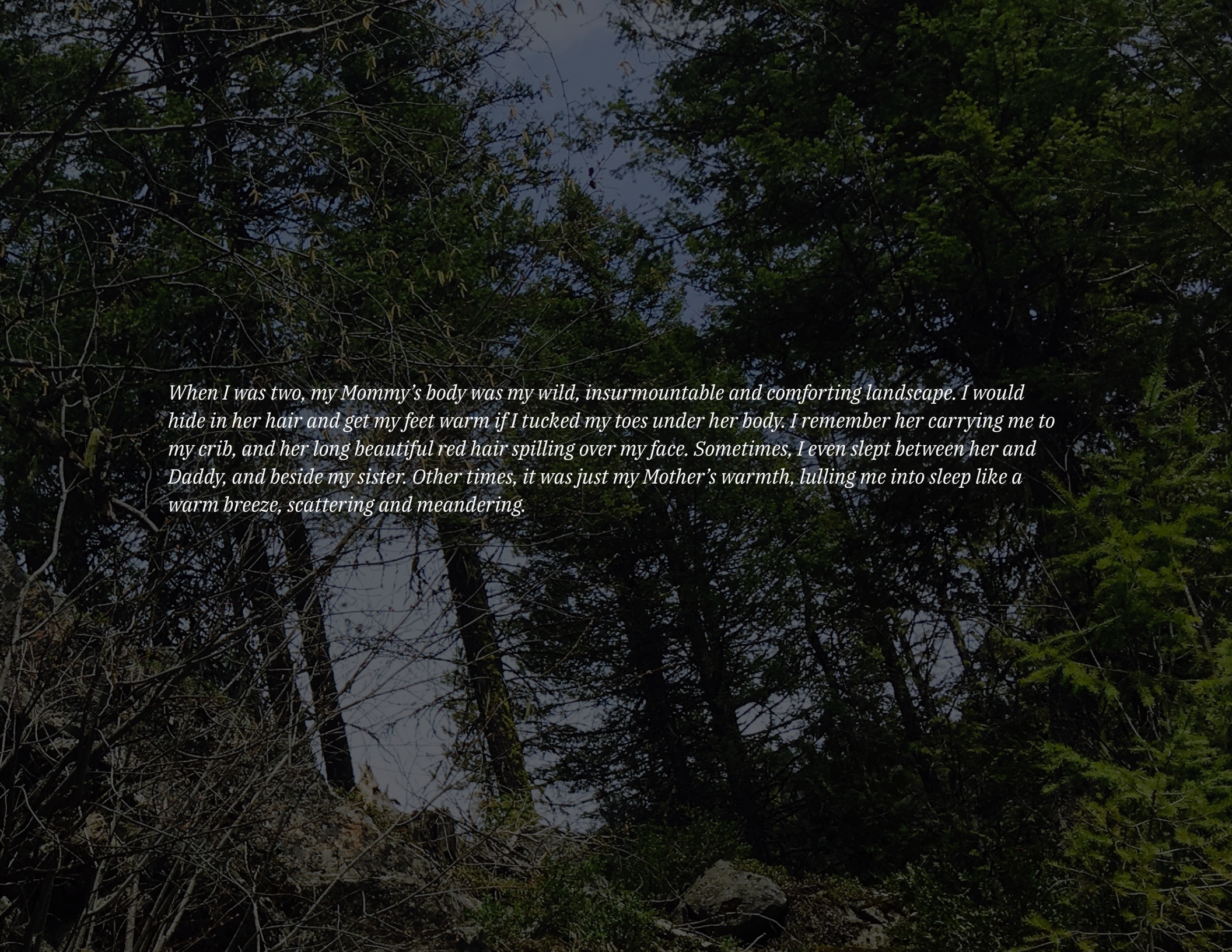
resonated with me in witnessing you, going through all of these challenges and experiencing all these things was that it's like already in us, it's already in us. The work has been done. We are already enough, you know?

It was nice to see somebody who was able to perform as themselves, without having to put up these barriers or to try to manipulate the audience. So, I do really feel like it is just this idea that I am enough. In this improvisational place, something will happen. Like something great will happen. I will bring it. It will be honest, I don't know what else, you know, this is all relating to sort of my performance, mental performance, preparedness, and psychology. I feel like a lot of it is like these thoughts, what we allow to come into our minds and, and I'm constantly pushing back those thoughts, such as, ego. I felt like your honesty was present in your work.



INTERLUDE

Safe Geographies

A dark, low-angle photograph of a dense forest. The trees are tall and thin, with their branches reaching upwards. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect. The overall mood is serene and somewhat somber due to the low light.

When I was two, my Mommy's body was my wild, insurmountable and comforting landscape. I would hide in her hair and get my feet warm if I tucked my toes under her body. I remember her carrying me to my crib, and her long beautiful red hair spilling over my face. Sometimes, I even slept between her and Daddy, and beside my sister. Other times, it was just my Mother's warmth, lulling me into sleep like a warm breeze, scattering and meandering.



Figure 58. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #8, 2020.



This section introduces *Hunting Self (2018-19)*, a 15-channel, 60-minute sound installation, which was curated and installed at the Arts Commons from September 3, 2018–Feb 17, 2019. I include this artwork because it is another example of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation which opens up notions of Carriance through a range of embodied, sensorial, immersive and creative approaches to sound composition.

This artwork takes up the two theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism and the Technological Unconscious, and takes up the subtheme, Thinking-Making-Doing—thoughts, action and the reaction of that thought.

I consider the expansive ways that sound leaves traces and how these fragments are felt in rural and urban spaces which are then translated through communication systems, bodies and digital space (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010; Smith and Sliwinski, 2017; Scannell, 2017; Thacker, 2010; Thrift, 2004). *Hunting Self (2018-19)* builds from my experiences creating the three-channel sound installation *Traces of Motherhood (2016)*. For example, in the first artwork, I learned how to capture the environmental sounds in-situ with the use of handheld technologies. This process informed how I approached making of *Hunting Self (2018-19)* and how I cared for and built the complex composition and later mixed the sounds in postproduction.

The following pages present the artwork and the evidence of Carriance through archival digital ephemera, which includes exhibition documentation, process photographs and sound design stills, the exhibition call, and submission text.

Previous page: Figure 59. prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. Installation view courtesy of Kristen Aubrey.

4.4.1 Arts Commons Gallery Exhibition: September 3, 2018–February 28, 2019



Figure 60. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self*, 2019. Installation view courtesy of Kristen Aubrey.



Figure 61. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. Installation view courtesy of Kristen Aubrey.*



Figure 62. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. Installation view courtesy of Kristen Aubrey.*

4.4.2 Reflection

By midnight Madame Gioconda's headache had become intense. All day the derelict walls and ceiling of the sound stage had reverberated with the endless din of traffic accelerating across the mid-town flyover which arched fifty feet above the studio's roof, a frenzied hypermanic babel of jostling horns, shrilling tyres, plunging brakes and engines that hammered down the empty corridors and stairways to the sound stage on the second floor, making the faded air feel leaden and angry (Ballard, 1960).

James Graham Ballard's fantastical story, *The Sound Sweep* (1960), tells the story of a mute boy taking care of others by sweeping unwanted sounds and other lingering residue away from a world which is now void of music. Interestingly, this world has replaced all sounds with only ultrasonic music. The boy vacuums away impressions with an instrument called a sonovac from an opera singer's house named Madame Gioconda. Ballard's sounds here take on new life and become reverberated jostling noises that fill up every nook of a house (Ballard, 1960). These compositions reverberate beyond the senses and change the sonic landscape of this world. What this implies is the power of sounds and their ability to exist and leave lingering traces or residue of themselves behind.

This story touches on acts of care and how sounds have the unique ability to translate into and through other material forms. In particular, how often without notice, our bodies experience acoustic information in fluid, spatial and immersive ways. Care considered this way, opens up notions of Carriance and embodiment.

The following pages consider these ideas alongside *Hunting Self* (2018-19), a looping 60-minute, 15-channel immersive sound installation that was installed at the 15+ Soundscape Gallery in the Arts Commons, in Calgary Alberta from September 3, 2018

– Feb 17, 2019 (see 62, 70-72). I discuss how sounds can allude to other places or memories of an experience.

These ideas are important to consider in relation to care and Feminist Materialist practices because many artists create works with sound waves that move through our bodies, auditory systems and ear canals in continuous loops. Considered in this way, sound is often experienced in circular ways, where one element carries, holds, or melds itself to other sounds or stands alone in opposition to others. Michel de Certeau, in his essay *Spaces and Places* (2011), describes spatial awareness as instantaneous configurations, or social or practiced spaces—full of known and felt moments of connection (de Certeau, 1980; 2011). His definitions for the terms space and place are particularly useful to consider how sound as a medium can defy boundaries and contends that spatial relationships can be instantaneous and unique. To clarify these ideas more, he defines place as a location in which two or more things coexist, beside one another in a relationship, or in an, “instantaneous configuration of positions” (Doherty, 2015, 118). While place is described here as an intersection of mobile elements: unstable, fluid, constantly in motion—composed of a series of movements that are in contractual proximities with one another (Doherty, 2015, 119). Henri Lefebvre describes how humans experience spatiality through embodied, conceptual and perceptual realms (Lefebvre, 1991).

Sound moves in frequencies that humans often cannot see, feel or even hear. Being all around us, in us, moving through us, it carries with it a legacy of past stories and connections. I suggest that these acoustic traces run deep and carry and shape how we mitigate our everyday. As Bellacasa reminds us, assemblages co-exist, are interconnected and live together (Bellacasa, 2017, 54). She states:

Care convokes trouble and worry for those who can be harmed by an assemblage but might be unable to voice their concern and need for care—for example, trees and flowers, babies in prams whose noses stroll at the level of SUV's exhaust pipes, or whose voice is less heard (Bellacasa, 2017, 52).

Bellacasa critically asks important questions here about responsibility and matters of care. Similarly, Dylan Robinson articulates how care is often devalued and how sound fits within a canon of privilege and settler modes of perception and relation (Robinson, 2020). Care considered in these ways provides a useful lens to approach notions of Carriance and the immersive ways that care is often endured, carried out and substantiated in sound compositions.

These ideas are important in sound discourse, because they acknowledge new approaches, open processes and ways of expressing embodiment, and memory. In particular, these approaches bring awareness to the complex life cycles of humans, animals, plants etc. And, arguably, thinking about the relational aspects of making and recording sound compositions that are fluid and full of immersive spatiality's. Lefebvre writes about complex loops as opening up loops or lived realms (Lefebvre, 1991).⁷⁷ While Sean Street suggests that auditory and image-based memories can be captured in time, housed in Memory Palaces that are real or imagined image structures used for future recollections (Street, 2014, 31). These constructed houses, as Paul Ricoeur notes, can be full of memories that can become something else: "halfway between pure memory and memory...halfway between fiction, and hallucination" (Ricoeur, 14, 2012). This speaks more to the metaphysical level of experience.

Building on de Certeau's ideas on practice spaces, (De Certeau, 1980; 2011), Street's Memory Palaces (Street, 2014), Bellasca's notions of care (Bellacasa, 2017), and Braidotti's notions on nomadic temporality (Braidotti, 2014), *Hunting Self* (2018-19) is a 15-channel sound and multimodal artwork that explores the imprint left from my nomadic, liminal and temporal body moving through various rural landscapes in the Pacific Northwest (De Certeau, 1980; 2011). In the process of making the work, I captured various field recordings with a smartphone from locations close to the #3 Crowsnest Highway over six months, as my family travelled routinely from Vancouver to Nelson (see Fig. 64-65). This route features a mixture of urban and rural environments and

expansive terrain and hiking trails. While recording, I would sit or crouch in locations for short bursts of time, attending to the plants, and landscape around me. My focus was on listening with all of my senses and engaging with whatever sound came my way. I also dedicated short bursts of recordings and put limits of how long I would record in a location because I was also attending to the needs of my children.

The field recordings were captured with an iPhone, Shure MV88/A iOS Digital Stereo Condenser Microphone, and windjammer and MOTIV app. The microphone plugs directly into the phone through a lightning connector. The microphone has cardioid (uni-directional) and bi-directional abilities and has a hinge or rotation design, which supports various recording angles. The MOTIV app translates the sound data. As my sound library grew, the sounds evolved and took on new shapes and directions that were more dynamic in shape, colour and attenuation.

The final composition is made up of several granulated sequences that feature voice, breath, anthropophagic, and geophonic sounds alongside live processed loops that are composed of elongated textures and tones.⁷⁸ For example, each of the 15-channels is unique because they showcase field recordings, traces of sounds from a specific location that are then layered on top of another sound from another topographical location elsewhere, through vocal processing. In this way, each sound carries the next and each channel exists alone, in unison, or in congruence with the other 14-channels.

The sounds weave, layer, stretch, condense and mesh together conscious and unconscious moments in time to highlight how systems are everywhere, part of the air we breathe, part of our bodies, and our urban and wild cultural ecologies. Stacy Alaimo describes this state of relations as trans-corporeal feminisms, which encourage us, "to imagine ourselves in constant interchange with the 'environment' and, paradoxically, perhaps to imagine an 'epistemological space' that allows for both the unpredictable becomings of other creatures and the limits of human knowledge" (Alaimo and Hekman, 2007, 14).

This artwork is another example of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation because it demonstrates a range of sensorial and creative approaches to Carriance, landscape, place, body and sound composition. I see the final composition as a series of acts of becoming—becoming together, and, simultaneously as an act of co-existence where each sound lives alone, and on top of one another, or, in parallel states of becoming (Haraway, 2014; Van Doreen et al., 2016, Braidotti, 2014; Lefebvre, 1991).

Hunting Self (2018-19) was installed in the +15 Soundscape Gallery in the Arts Commons. The gallery operates as a public corridor with 15 individual spatialized speakers positioned throughout the length of the space (see Fig. 61).⁷⁹ The Arts Commons' 15 + corridor rig set-up consisted of an Apple Mac Pro computer, amplified through a MOTU 24Ao USB audio interface which drove the 15 channels and 12 ceiling speaker channels and three sub-channels. The ceiling amplification was positioned throughout the Arts Commons' +15 corridor, in left and right sequences. Each speaker was designated to a specific sound file and played continually throughout the exhibition (Arts Commons, Website). The main goal of this artwork was to create an expansive score that would filter throughout the space as participants traversed along the corridor. For example, as the audience migrates from one part of the public corridor to another, the soundscape changes in tone, texture, delivery, and reverberates on surfaces, windows, walls, ceiling, floor, and is felt through the body. The audience can stop and linger or traverse from the beginning to the end of the corridor in five minutes. During this time, the sound circulates within the space, and loops over an hour to exert influence on anyone in the vicinity.

The next section discusses *Mothering Bacteria* (2019), a three-channel audio and video installation and live performance that was co-created with Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda that captures mothered bodies in the act of caretaking bacteria that lives on and off the skin. This research takes up Karen Barad's notions of posthumanism, performativity and what she describes as the interface between human, political, technological and scientific (Barad, 2007).

4.4.3 Arts Commons Exhibition Call: November 29, 2017

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

+15 SOUNDSCAPE

18-19 Season

Submission is open to local and national sound artists (please note that artists must be Canadian citizens currently residing in Canada to be eligible for this program).

Deadline: Wednesday, November 29th 2017 before 11:59PM

Email submission to: [Natasha Jensen Visual and Media Arts Specialist Njensen@artscommons.ca](mailto:Njensen@artscommons.ca) **Attention: +15 Soundscape Submission**

+15 Soundscape: Sound artists from across Canada are invited to submit multichannel sound art proposals for the +15 pedway system located in Arts Commons (specific location overlooks the Scene Shop and is located between Calgary City Hall and the Glenbow Museum). The selected piece must be a minimum of 60 minutes in length and will loop continuously for three-four months.

For the proposal please include a 10-minute sample of your proposed soundscape. This project reaches a diverse population of all ages; content must be suitable for public spaces. Please keep in mind that audiences may experience one minute of the piece, or the piece in its entirety on an ongoing basis.

Arts Commons: As the third largest performing arts centre in Canada (after the National Arts Centre in Ottawa and Place Des Artes in Montreal), Arts Commons is an ever evolving space featuring music, theatre, dance and visual and media arts of all kinds. As a civic partner to the City of Calgary, Arts Commons' main function is to care for our facility, which is over 13 acres of public space. Fundamentally, that means we are unique and have unique challenges that come with publicly accessible spaces; we are not a gallery, museum or dedicated exhibition space. We are a working performing arts space through which hundreds of citizens pass each day. In the 2014-2015 Season alone, over 1,000 artists worked and performed here through us, and our resident companies. Arts Commons along with our six resident companies employs an additional 240 full-time arts professionals.

Operating in tandem with that main function, Arts Commons Presents is the programming team (of five persons) within Arts Commons. Engaging with over 48,000 patrons alone, we present over 100 musicians, speakers and comedians on our stages, facilitate and program over 120 visual and media artists throughout the building, and program Arts Learning opportunities through 120 artists for almost 10,000 students in any one season. Arts Commons Presents includes concerts, education, visual and media arts events and community events; these areas often work together or are complimentary.

Arts Commons Presents invests significantly in emerging and mid-career artists. We value innovative, thought-provoking work that is also community minded. What this means to you as an artist is our relationship will often not start or end with a single exhibition, interaction or performance. The intent is to grow those diverse arts experiences with you; we value your work and believe it contributes the diversity of Calgary's cultural fabric and fosters a compassionate society of culturally engaged citizens.



+15 Soundscape Application Form Submission Process:**Eligibility of work:**

- Must have been completed within the past five years.
- Must be appropriate for a diverse population of all ages; content must be suitable for public spaces.
- The creator's primary residence is in Canada—must be a Canadian citizen.
- Minimum 60 minutes in length.

Please include:

- Artist CV (maximum two pages per artist(s)).
- Artist Statement/description of the artwork (maximum 500 words).
- Artist(s) biography (maximum 400 words).

A link or MP3 file of proposed work either in its entirety or a 10-15 minute sample of the Soundscape. Include a stereo reduction for multi-channel work for reference purposes only. ***Please note: Successful applicants will be required to provide files that are compatible with SFX multichannel software.**

Signed application form. Technical Information for the Artist: The system is made up of an Apple Mac Pro computer using Figure 53's QLab v3 playback software which plays through a MOTU 24Ao USB audio interface to drive fifteen (15) discreet channels of amplification, powering twelve (12) ceiling speaker channels and three (3) sub channels. The ceiling speakers are positioned alternately to the left and right of the centre of the +15 corridor. Along one side of the corridor there are three (3) in-wall subwoofers for low frequency or effect use. The final audio files used for the installation should be wave files, mono, or stereo which can be assigned to the discreet ceiling speaker and the sub channels as required by the artist. See floor map attached for speaker placement (see Fig. 63).



205 8th Avenue SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0K9 | 403-294-7455 | artscommons.ca

4.4.4 Floor Plan

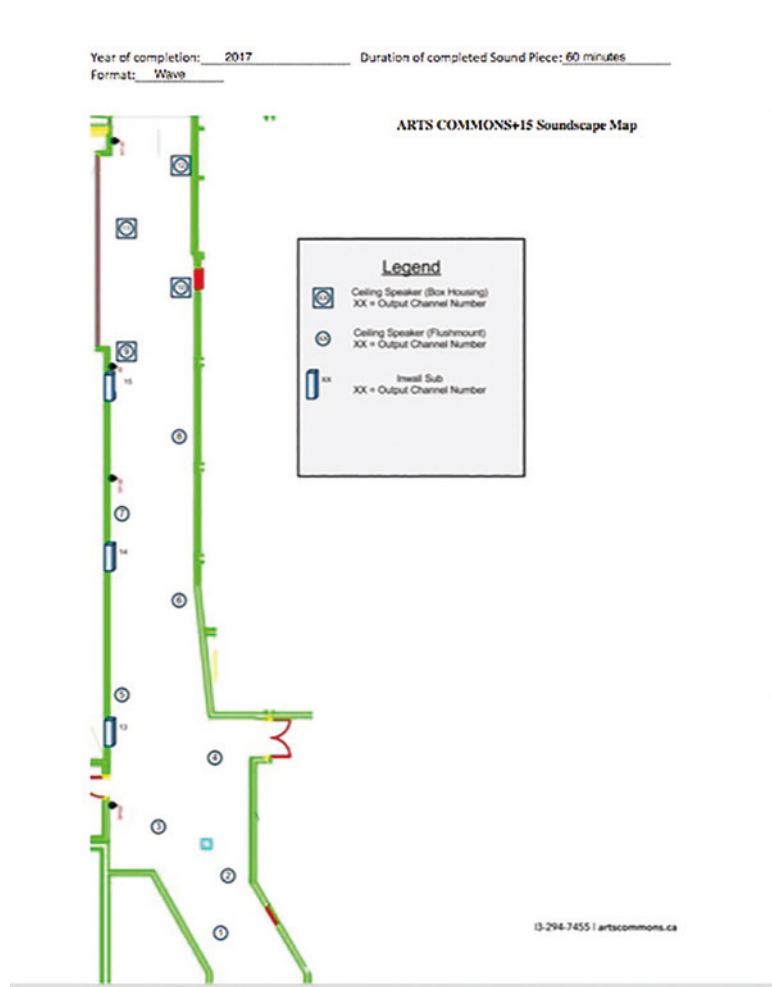


Figure 63. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self*, 2019. Gallery floor plan courtesy of Arts Commons.

4.4.5 Arts Commons Gallery Submission: December 1, 2017

Hunting Self, 15-channel, 60-minute composition

By prOphecy sun

Statement

Over the last four years, I have been creating work with weather balloons—high altitude objects used to carry scientific instruments into the troposphere to send back information about atmospheric pressure, temperature, and wind speed. Instead of releasing it into the sky however, I engage the balloon in an uncanny duet, and use the weather balloon as a metaphor for motherhood.

During these experiments I also record ambient scores using smartphone technology. This type of tool is responsive to improvisation, has manageable limits and parameters, allowing for solitary and self-reliant pre and post-production. The quality reflects the desired immediacy of the performance as well as evoking a dream like aesthetic through its lo fi properties. I often rely upon beat poet Allen Ginsberg's axiom, "first thought, best thought" in order to initiate the move from thought to practice (Ginsberg, *Spontaneous Mind: Selected Interviews*).

Hunting Self (2018) builds on these notions to present a vocal vignette that weaves, stretches, and meshes conscious and unconscious moments in time. The composition uses processed vocal melodies to highlight how systems are everywhere, part of the air we breathe, part of our bodies, part of our urban and wild cultural ecologies. Through the layering of multiple compositions, the fluidity of the common areas then becomes condensed spaces where the audience, the installation and their movement bypass clear meaning.

4.4.6 Project Log: April–August, 2018

4.4.6.1 The Making: April 3, 2018



Figure 64. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2018. Process shot.*



Figure 65. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self*, 2018. Process shot.

MY JOURNAL NOTES: March 02, 2018

- Purchase Shure MV88/A iOS Digital Stereo Condenser Microphone to aide in recording possibilities
- Collect new sound samples from various locations on route from Vancouver to Nelson, BC
- Build library of sounds that can be used in the 15-channel composition
- Create vocals
- Create soundtrack in Audacity
- Weave multiple layers
- Mix snippets like geophonic, and biophonic sounds (see Hildegard's pieces for the World Soundscape Project)
- Mix in vocal live performance snippets
- Mix in low and high tones

4.4.6.2 Sound Composition: July 11, 2018

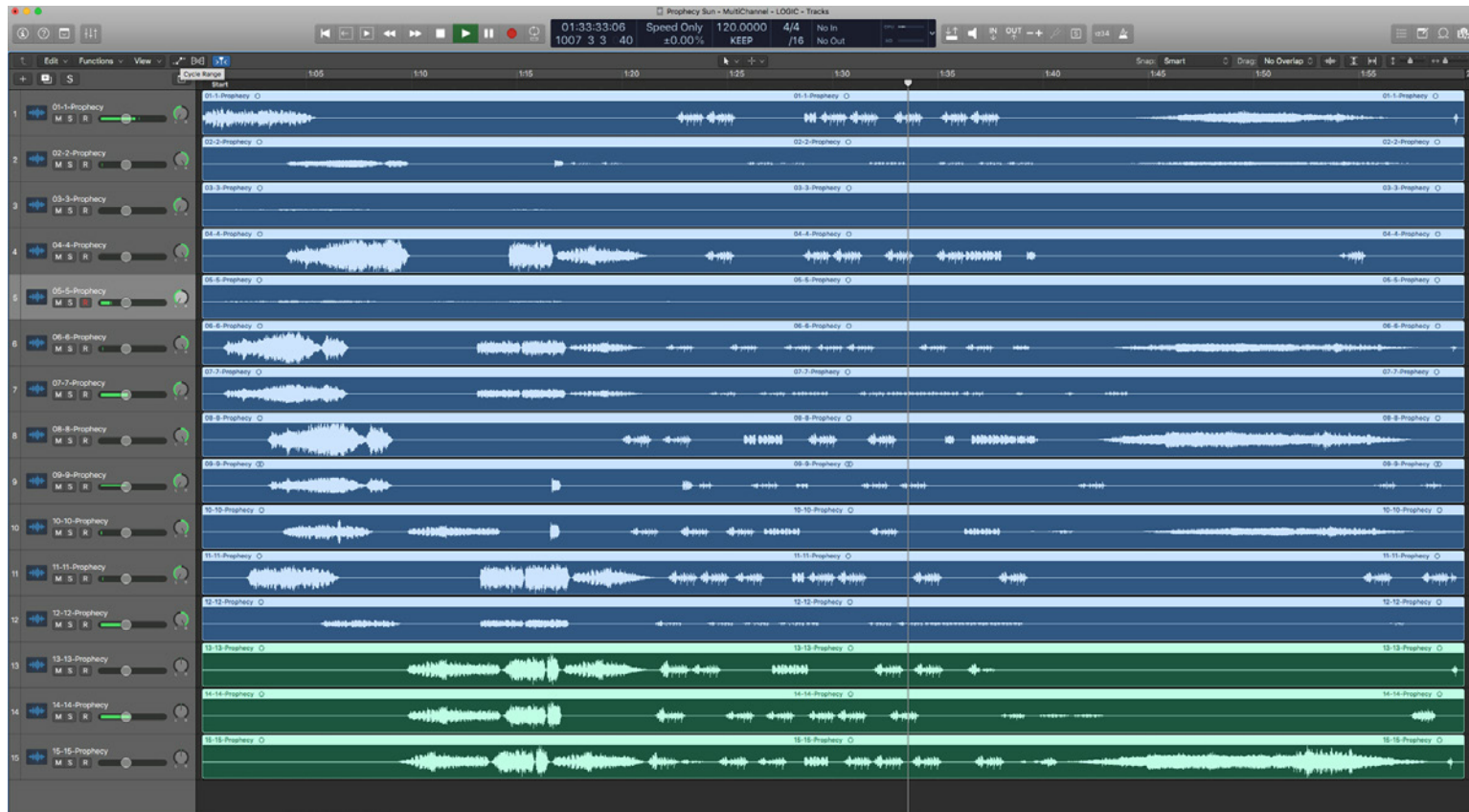


Figure 66. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. Mastering track at Otic Sound. Photo of computer mixing board featuring the 15-channel sound composition.*

4.4.7 Arts Commons Gallery Exhibition Program: September 3, 2018–February 28, 2019

SELF-GUIDED VISUAL ARTS TOUR

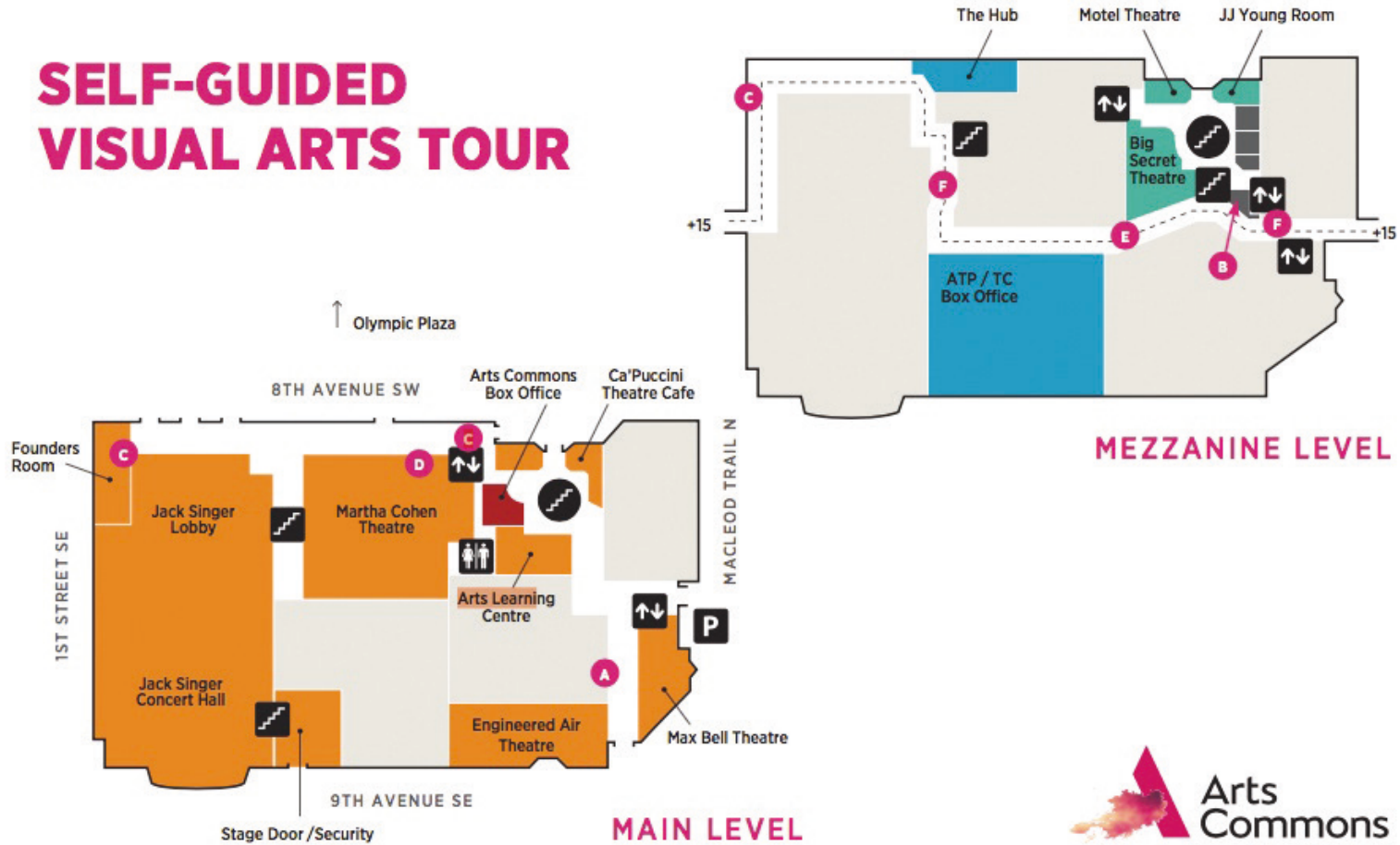


Figure 67. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. 15 + Exhibition Tour Guide, courtesy of Arts Commons.*

A WINDOW GALLERIES

Check out the seven display spaces, in the hall outside of the Max Bell Theatre, used as exhibition opportunities for two dimensional and sculptural works created by local emerging and professional artists and collectives.

B LEDGE GALLERY

The largest gallery space in Arts Commons, Ledge Gallery is located on the +15 Level of Upper Centre Court. There you'll find new installations, performative, and sculptural works. Ledge Gallery is also home to our artist-in-residence program during the summer months.

C BROADCAST LAB

Arts Commons provides screening space for media artists to showcase experimental film, video art, animations, and short documentaries, on three separate media monitors throughout the building.

D LIGHTBOX STUDIO

Located beside Martha Cohen Theatre on the main level, Lightbox Studio is an experimental studio and exhibition space that promotes studio-based projects, and has featured artists such as Derek Beaulieu, Calgary Poet Laureate 2014-16.

E +15 SOUNDSCAPE

Located near Theatre Calgary and Alberta Theatre Projects' administrative offices on the +15 level, the +15 Soundscape is a multichannel sound system that provides opportunities to local and national sound artists.

F +15 WINDOW GALLERIES

Exhibiting in a public space provides emerging artists the opportunity to present their work and to engage communities in various levels of dialogue. Arts Commons facilitates community programming in our eight (8) +15 Galleries, which are located in the +15 hallway between City Hall and the Glenbow Museum. Since 1992, over 1056 artist exhibitions have been supported at Arts Commons.

Figure 68. *prOphecy sun, Hunting Self, 2019. 15 + Exhibition Gallery Tour Guide, courtesy of Arts Commons.*

4.4.8 Arts Commons Gallery Poster and Label: September 3, 2018–February 28, 2019



Figure 69. prOphecy sun, *Hunting Self*, 2019. Poster and Exhibition Label.

4.4.9 Arts Commons Gallery Press Release

Arts Commons Presents
The +15 Soundscape



Hunting Self
prOphecy sun

Location: +15 Hallway (Near Alberta Theatre Projects and Theatre Calgary offices in Arts Commons)

Date: September 3–February 28, 2019

Artist Reception: November 30, 2019 in the Hub at Arts Commons

Arts Commons Presents brings a new media art sound installation to the +15 hallway that will take you on a journey of meditation. This 15-speaker multiambient music installation was designed specifically for the Arts Commons +15 Walkway and is dedicated to the memory of Richard McDowell and Michael Green.

4.4.10 Arts Commons Gallery Reception Press Release: September 30, 2018

Join us at a compelling and eclectic artist reception for the current gallery exhibitions at Arts Commons!



**Arts Commons
Arts Learning Center
Friday, November 30, 2018**

Artist reception time: 5:30PM–8:30PM

Meet and mingle with local artists, curators, and art lovers alike. This is your chance to celebrate our current visual and media artists, hear a thoughtful account of their exhibitions, and have a deeper conversation about contemporary art. Light refreshments will be provided!

We will be celebrating the following exhibitions:

Ledge Gallery: Rebecca Reid and Brendan Kane "The Third Mind: Recording Studio"

Lightbox Studio: Seities Studio: Bruce Hildesheim, Sanja Lukac and Francis A. Willey "THE STIMULANT"

Window Galleries: Rocio Graham "When I Think of Home"

Broadcast Lab: Andree-Anne Roussel "Chestnut Cookies", Katelyn Liakos "THE BLUES", Caroline Blais "Murmur"

Soundscape: PrOphecy Sun "Hunting Self"

+15 Community Galleries: "Nihisgaka Ogha— For Our Children"

Participating Tsuut'ina Artists:

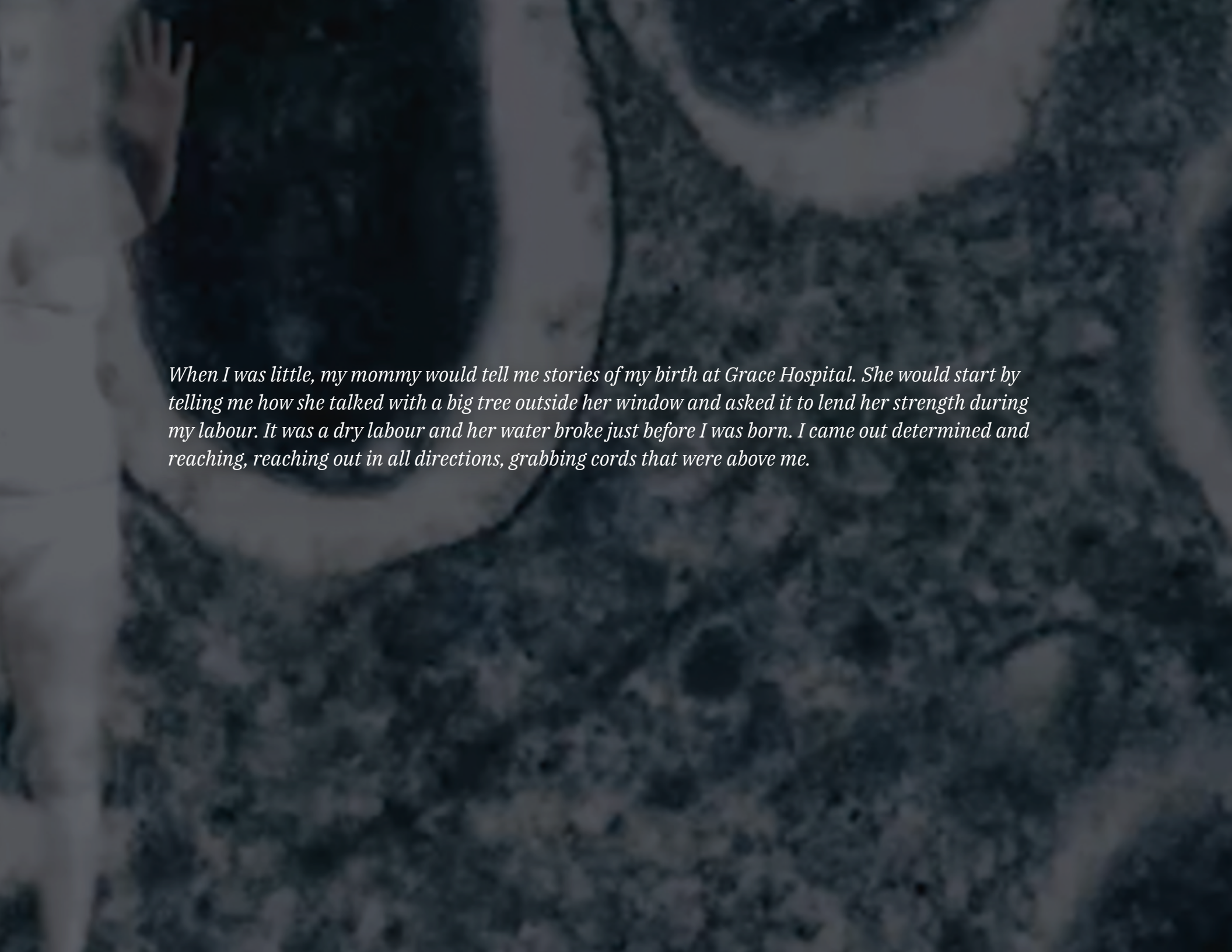
Willow Crane, Tia Big Crow, Rossy Crowchild, Aaron Eagletail, Josh Littlelight, Lacey (Breezy) Meguinis, Nathan Meguinis, Harold Onespot, Stephanie One Spot, Emil Starlight and Keegan Starlight.

This event takes place on the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.



INTERLUDE

*Mama's Recollection
of My Birth*



When I was little, my mommy would tell me stories of my birth at Grace Hospital. She would start by telling me how she talked with a big tree outside her window and asked it to lend her strength during my labour. It was a dry labour and her water broke just before I was born. I came out determined and reaching, reaching out in all directions, grabbing cords that were above me.



Figure 70. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #9, 2020.

4.5 *Mothering Bacteria*

Medium

3-channel A/V installation; 20-minute live performance

Location

UC San Diego, UC Davis

Materials

Bacteria, AI, Video, Nikon Camera, white paint, fabric, construction paper, costume, 2 iPads, computer

Collaborators

Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda

Link

<https://prophecysun.com/Mothering-Bacteria>



This section discusses *Mothering Bacteria (2019)*, a three-channel audio and video installation and live performance that was co-created with Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda. This ongoing collaboration explores the relationships between particular bodies that mother and bacteria; the process of caring for one another; and how acts of care break down the porous boundaries between Self and Other using sound, bacteria, and computational AI tools and performances in real-time (Sun et al., 2019, 456).

The artwork was shown at gallery@CALIT2 in the 12th conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition from June 23-26, 2019. This piece was also presented at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference, Paradise on Fire, at the University of California, Davis from June 26-30th, 2019.

This work takes up all the three theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism, the Optical and the Technological Unconscious and the subtheme of Self and Other—how we relate to another person, animal or thing. This work also highlights feminist collaborative processes, bodies, bacteria, moving images, sound composition and computational tools through an exploration of hybrid methods of production and creative dissemination. The following pages present this research and the evidence of Carriance through archival digital ephemera, which includes exhibition and performance documentation, blog interview text, exhibition call, submission text, poster, label, process and other documentation, video stills and a reflection.

Previous page: Figure 71. prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, Mothering Bacteria, 2018. Video still.

4.5.1 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition: June 25, 2019



Figure 72. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Exhibition view.



Figure 73. prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, Mothering Bacteria, 2019. Exhibition view.



Figure 74. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Exhibition view.

4.5.2 Reflection

Becoming has to do with emptying out the self, opening it out to possible encounters with the 'outside'. Virginia Woolf's intensive genre is exemplary here, in that the artist's 'eye' captures the outside world by making itself receptive to the totality of perception. What gets activated is a seemingly absent-minded floating attention or a fluid sensibility that is porous to the outside and which our culture has coded as 'feminine'. This sensibility is central to the creative process. It combines the accuracy of the cartographer with the hyper-sensitivity of the sensualist in apprehending the precise quality of an assemblage of elements, like the shade of the light at dusk, or the curve of the wind just before the rain falls. In those moments of floating awareness when rational control releases its hold, 'Life' rushes on towards the sensorial/perceptive apparatus with exceptional vigour and higher degrees of definition (Braidotti, 2014, 171).

In the above quote, Rosi Braidotti writes about emptying oneself so there is enough space for other potentialities and new encounters (Braidotti, 2014). In this sense, this act of becoming is forged out of creative and intuitive moments of space giving. Inspired by these perspectives, the following pages reflect on the artwork *Mothering Bacteria* (2019), a three-channel audio and video and live performance piece that was co-created with Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda. The artwork was shown at gallery@CALIT2 at the San Diego Qualcomm Institute in the 12th conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive

Systems Exhibition from June 23-26, 2019.

Inspired by Braidotti's writings on nomadic temporality and spatial sites of co-production (Braidotti, 2011), Bellacasa's ideas on care and reciprocity (Bellasca, 2017), and Haraway's notions on post-humanistic relationality (Haraway, 2006), *Mothering Bacteria* (2019) combines mothered bodies, sound, bacteria, and computational, AI tools and performances in real-time as a way to surveil the process of mothered bodies care-taking bacteria that lives on an off the skin. Thus, this piece is a provocation on becoming, a speculative fiction for imaginative futures in which algorithms demarcate the boundaries between the biological and the digital. Succinctly put, the work is a forecasting that questions binaries of reproduction and self-identity through acts of care.

This research uses the cinematic medium as a feminist strategy to explore the seen, the unseen and the inaudible frequencies such as bacteria growing, and how these complicate or foreground the complex relationships of bacteria and the human body. Creative systems of becoming align with Smith and Sliwinski's ideas on photographic approaches which present forward-looking documents. For instance, filmic processes or "prosthetic vision helpers" aid humans in viewing and exposing things, objects, and unconscious movements that happen before us or out of perceptual range. This is important because these processes extend the realm of possibility and visibility and enable us to see what is hidden, and view what is imperceptible to the eyes. In particular, the cinematic techniques used in *Mothering Bacteria* (2019) demonstrate what Smith and Sliwinski's describe as the "reach and complexity of unconscious perception" (Smith, 2017, 14).

Using a Feminist Materialist approach to the expansive network of relations that weave through human and non-human bodies (Self and Other), the artwork considers the connection between matter, bodies, technologies and environment (Sun et al., 2019; Mondloch, 2018). This creative praxis informs and complicates the junctures at which artificial and human intelligence meet. For instance, in *Mothering Bacteria* (2019), the digital moving images and sound of the artwork break down, glitch as AI meet and the

video disintegrates over time (see Fig. 72-73). The choice to create the artwork this way is a creative strategy employed to disrupt boundaries of bodies, technology and systems. In line with this idea on cognitive shifting, Braidotti writes on nomadic thought and how it stresses the idea of blurring boundaries such as embodiment. For example, she discusses how bodies are subjects engaged in machinic processes that are embedded in material structures, and how the act opening oneself up is a dynamic process of becoming (Braidotti, 2014).

She states:

It emphasizes the machinic yet vibrant quality of the lived body, for instance by stressing how the mind is affected by the dynamic nature of perception and the data inscription relayed by complex neural networks in the brain...The motions and passions of the cognitive, perceptive, and affective faculties engender creative leaps of the imagination that animate the mind, illuminate the senses, and connect transversally well beyond the frame of the individual self (Braidotti, 2014, 3)

In this excerpt, Braidotti describes how nomadic thought is central to moving past individual thought and how this vitalist materialist perspective opens and extends consciousness beyond the flesh. This aligns with Smith and Sliwinski's notions on photography being able to freeze, enlarge, and capture fragments that cannot otherwise be seen or consciously detected (Smith and Sliwinski, 2017; Smith, 2014). I see this approach as a feminist sensibility that pushes notions of time, creative thought and in turn experimental production. Much like Stiegler's ideas on how information systems can help us to extend, remember and retrieve memories, this research blurs notions of temporality and place (Stiegler, 2010). Arguably, this perspective is complex and fluid. Described another way, this approach creates transverse and imaginative spaces of creative leaping, whereby bodies can move, leave traces, shape shift into, or through new frequencies or forms that transition between technology systems, networks, and place (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010; Braidotti, 2011; Haraway, 2006). Similarly, Roy Ascott and Edward A. Shanken's suggest that

mediated environments and telecommunication systems help us to extend our gaze and perception beyond (Ascott and Shanken, 2003, 235-36).

Mothering Bacteria (2019) is an exploration of care and about nomadic thought and affective processes that can drive new ways of approaching matter, bodies, sounds, organisms and digital tools. In this way, the artwork takes up notions Carriance through performative actions of holding space for each other (in the making and the creative process), bacteria, performers of amplifying and transcending the body into unpredictable configurations of creativity.

Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference

This piece was also co-presented with Freya Zinovieff at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference, *Paradise on Fire*, at the University of California, Davis from June 26-30th, 2019. This conference was diverse in approach and featured the following thematic topic streams: Activism; Animals; Creative Engagements; Eco-aesthetics; Ecofiction, Climate Fiction; Ecology, Metaphor, Meaning; Environmental Justice; Feeling Community; Future Making; International Criticism; Inundation; Materialities and Energies; On Fire; Pasts and Futures; Place and Paradise; Plant and Food Studies; Public and Digital Environmental Humanities; Teaching, Pedagogy, and Mentoring; The Anthropocene; Walls and Borders.

For the presentation, we created a performative and mediated way of showing this research-creation that featured an installation, costumes, text, video and other visual representations and movement choreography (see Fig. 76). Further, the room was darkened to provide full audience engagement with the visual arrangement on the screens. The piece began with visual cues while we read the text script from the iPads in sequential order. After the performance presentation, we engaged in a series of physical explorations in costume, tethered together through a long fabric cord.

We shot the pieces in various indoor and outdoor locations throughout the conference campus. The labs were performed in front and around other pedestrians and other audience members (see Fig. 87). This idea of presenting acts of experimental becoming, transcending, zigzagging through temporal states, institutional zones, performative structures is something also innately explored throughout this thesis.

Building on Braidotti's notions on relational, self-organized nomadic approaches to creative production and matter, these two dissemination strategies (performative presentation and immersive installation) exemplify a Feminist Materialist Research-Creation practice because they highlight how complex, experimental, and collaborative artmaking processes are

and what they can offer. By this I mean that creative practices are fluid, materialist and vitalist (Braidotti, 2011, 8). As Braidotti writes, creative output is mobile, and "relocates the materiality of the technological artifact in a different position, which engenders specific social relations and interactions" (Braidotti, 2011, 12). I see these ideas as a productive framework; however, I consider each of figurations demonstrated throughout this chapter thus far as examples of feminist expressions that are in the process of becoming—reforming, temporal, shape shifting and as such show different positions of oscillation between technology and body.

4.5.3 Project Log: July 26, 2018

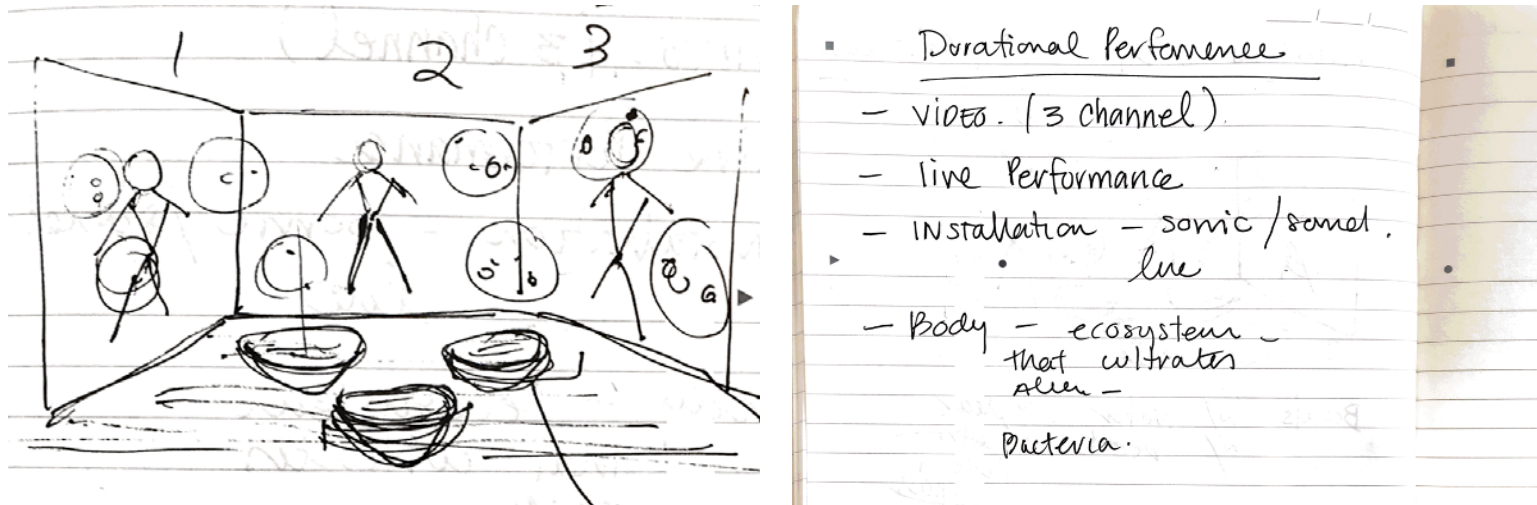
4.5.3.1 The Making

MY MEETING NOTES FROM OUR TOWN CAFÉ: July 26, 2018

- Create an immersive three-channel piece with female bodies
- Live sound, installation and performance
- Amplify the frequencies in the room
- Contact microphones
- 3 petri dishes in centre of each body
- Film us with paint on our bodies
- Film in a private location or home with access to water/sink or a shower
- Create a movement score
- Body, ecosystem
- Tending, caretaking and cultivation
- Bowls, water and bodies combined
- Make white paint to cover bodies
- Create a prototype to share with the call

4.5.3.2 The Making

PROJECT SKETCHES: July 26, 2018



- Durational Performance
- video. (3 channel)
- live performance
- installation - sonic / sound.
- live
- Body - ecosystem -
that ultrates
alien -
Bacteria.

Figure 75. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2018. Project sketches by Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda.

4.5.3.3 The Making

VIDEO SHOOT NOTES: July 27, 2018

Set-up

- Arrange childcare for 3 hours
- Clear plants from living room
- Create space and move packing boxes
- Create choreography with butoh inspired movement
- Practice movement with slow motion hand gestures
- Collect materials
- Buy pins to hang fabric on the wall
- Hang fabric and paper in living room

Shoot

- Pull hair off face
- Apply paint to body
- Reapply as needed
- Stand in stationary spot in front of camera
- Try the movement score
- Improvise the score again
- Wash paint off body
- Help each member apply paint to body
- Help shoot the video
- Help with the movement
- Clean up the living room

4.5.3.4 The Making

VIDEO SHOOT: July 27, 2018



Figure 76. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2018. Video shoot. Photo courtesy of Freya Zinovieff.

4.5.3.5 The Making

SOUND COMPOSITION ON SOUNDCLOUD: August 3, 2018



Figure 77. prOphecy sun and Freya Zinovieff. *Mothering Bacteria*, 2018. Soundtrack.

4.5.3.6 The Making

SOUND COMPOSITION NOTES: August 3, 2018

- Create a composition that blends original Freya's bacteria sounds with breath and other tones
- Compose to be approximately 20 minutes
- Stretch, manipulate and granulate sounds
- Send to Freya for feedback
- Do a second edit
- Send to Freya and Gabriela for feedback
- Adjust levels of new heartbeat sounds added by Freya
- Export to Wave and Mp3 format
- Upload track to WeTransfer/Soundcloud and send to Freya and Gabriela

4.5.4 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Submission: February 11, 2019

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface

By prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda

Abstract

Bodies are interfaces, thresholds, vestibules, and gateways capable of hosting, carrying and birthing other life forms. Occupying indeterminable positions, interfacing with multidimensional borders, cultures, media, and ecologies; mediating internal and external inputs/relations—bodies feel vibrations, perceive and collect information, remediate, respond, negotiate expectations, and make connections through the limbs, eyes, ears, skin, cells and beyond. Scholars, critics, and theorists describe this complex interfacing as a multispecies relationship consisting of deep histories, continually re-forming and transitioning into something new (Dooren et al., 2016). What Eben Kirksey deems as the microorganism, *Wolbachia*, a post-human actor that meshes a variety of species together that exist in different time frames and realities (Kirksey, 2018). For this exhibition, we introduce *Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface* (2018), a multichannel artwork with an embedded AI that interacts with bacteria, as it grows in real-time.

Author Keywords

Computational, AI tools; Algorithms; Body; Mothering; Interface; Audio/Visual Installation; Sound Poetics; Research-Creation; Post-humanism; Video Disintegration; Co-becoming; Multispecies.

Introduction

Symbolically, motherhood is seen as a natural stage in a woman's life and considered beyond discussion (Holmes, 2006). Mary Kelly deems motherhood as a psychic space that signifies processes of maternity. While Ivy Schweitzer describes it as a fixed, bourgeois femininity that is inevitably inseparable (Schweitzer, 1990). Yet, acts of mothering remain socially invisible, casting light on the disparity between gender roles and how acts of care are not remunerated (Maushart, 2000). Bethany Doane suggests that contemporary women enact political and social agency to critique traditional, male-dominated viewpoints and accepted models on how to manage birth, including a foregrounding of political subjectivity as a pushback on social stigmas of reproduction, that exist beyond the binary (Doane, 2015).

The act of mothering and the trope of motherhood has also been the subject matter of cutting-edge feminist artworks since the twentieth century. From Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973), Judy Chicago's *The Birth Project* (1980-1985), Mónica Mayer and Maris Bustamante's *¡Madres!* (Mothers!, 1983-90), Olga Chernysheva's *Mothers and Daughters, First Meeting* (1994), Lea and Pekka Kantonen's *The Mother* (2000), Catherine Opie's *Self-Portrait/Nursing* (2004), and Lenka Clayton's Artist Residency in Motherhood (2012- 2015), what these artists reflect upon are the political, economic, psychological and physical aspects of motherhood, and artmaking.

For the C&C/DIS 2019 Art Exhibition at gallery@CALIT2, UC San Diego Qualcomm Institute, we propose *Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface* (2018), a three-channel A/V adaptation of an ongoing research project combining bodies, bacteria, and computational, AI tools and performances in real-time. The project is a speculative forecast of the human as a multispecies animal, and part of an emerging field of research that explores how multispecies bodies are becoming more-than-human, comprised of masses of non-human organisms, algorithms, bacteria, spores, cells, viruses, and fungi. Something akin to what Thom Van Dooren et al., convey as an act of *co-becoming* other that can reveal more-than-human shared spaces of temporality (Dooren et al., 2016). Or, what Jenna Sutela describes as non-linear creative parallel spaces that mesh devices, ancient materials and time together (Manatakis, Web).

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface (2018), consists of three videos projected onto the walls of the exhibition space (see Fig. 72-74). The accompanying sound is amplified through a sound system. The soundscore combines bacteria and environmental sounds created and translated through contact microphones with the addition of processed voice, breath, delay and loop.

Body as an Interface

Bodies are interfaces, thresholds, vestibules, and gateways capable of hosting, carrying and birthing other life forms. Occupying indeterminable positions, interfacing with multidimensional borders, cultures, media, and ecologies. Bodies mediate internal and external inputs and relations, they feel vibrations, perceive and collect information, remediate, respond, negotiate expectations, and make connections through the limbs, eyes, ears, skin, cells and beyond. Scholars, critics, and theorists describe this complex interfacing as a multispecies relationship consisting of deep histories, that continually re-form and transition into something new (Dooren et al., 2016). Akin to what Eben Kirksey describes as the meshing of a variety of species together, in an assemblage that is constructed through different time frames and realities (Kirksey, 2018).

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface (2018), is an ongoing research project that seeks to highlight the agential interplay between the computational and the biological. Using mid-age female bodies inscribed by the lived experience of childbearing, as metaphors to reflect on the body as an interface, the work explores how an interface is capable of illuminating the creation of something new. Projected onto the bodies are an iterative canvas of growing bacteria. The artwork uses a custom digital tool to interact with the growth of these organisms and the resulting interaction is sonified. The computational, AI tools are programmed as dynamic systems, capable of mimicking the behaviour of the bacteria growing on the skin, and subsequently making their own decisions on how to interact with the sonification of the bacteria. The sound that emerges is generated by the biological growth and the visuals created by the digital tools. Through the process of interaction, a visual and sonic transformation takes place where the computational, AI tools distort the image to the point of disintegration, thus setting the stage for new life forms to generate.

This work explores the relationship between the volume of the sonification of the bacterial growth and how it modulates the digital images (produced by the computational and AI tools) that then morph into a nonlinear construction. Building on the initial parameters in which we set the program to make a higher volume that corresponds to the sonification of bacteria driving the computational tools, —the video shows an interplay between the image of the bodies and the bacteria as one fades into one another. Over time, the bacteria and the images of the body disintegrate and morph into other forms of representation, in which

the female body becomes unrecognizable. Through this process, a new space of speculation is revealed—a different realm where species can co-become with one another, and where practices of co-becoming can be enacted. This potent space highlights how an image of the mothering body can disappear and be a metaphor of the breakdown of self and other and speculates how acts of care can move away from traditional binaries of reproduction, self-sacrifice and self-identity and move towards the potential production of hybrid forms of being. In this way, the agency of the process comes through in the sound, as the agential properties of skin become a site of biological and computational reproduction—physically transforming the sonic realm.

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface (2018), is an adaptation of an ongoing research project that combines bodies, bacteria, performance, and embedded computational, AI tools in real-time. Artists prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves Sepulveda conceptualized, performed and edited the initial piece. The work provides a speculative forecast of future time in which algorithms demarcate the boundaries between the biological and the digital. As AI shapes every aspect of modern human life, computational algorithms can no longer be considered separate from the technologies that uphold their present global, political and cultural systems. Future iterations of the research will involve the collaborative application and development of new computational and AI tools designed by artist Steve DiPaola's iVIZ lab at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University.

Conclusion

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface (2018), paves the way for further research in two emergent directions. Firstly, we identify how artificial agents can be both an entity and a species, living and multiplying in digital space. Secondly, through the creation of a set of generative digital tools, we explore how sound and computational, AI tools have the potential to elicit and enact practices of co-becoming, or thriving together.

In this paper, we described the installation, the theoretical and artistic discourse, the design process and methods. We explore the use of digital tools that highlight how the boundaries between self and other are entangled. Our goal is to develop computational, AI tools that mimic the behaviour of the bacteria growing on the skin, which leads to a visual and sonic disintegration. Further, through this interplay, we create a new kind of coalescence that takes place between AI and human bodies. This ongoing project seeks to contribute to a growing body of artwork that explores motherhood by offering a theorization through practice on how female bodies that mother create a unique microcosm in which multiple species interact, become *with*, and thrive, together.

4.5.4.1 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition Program: June 25, 2019

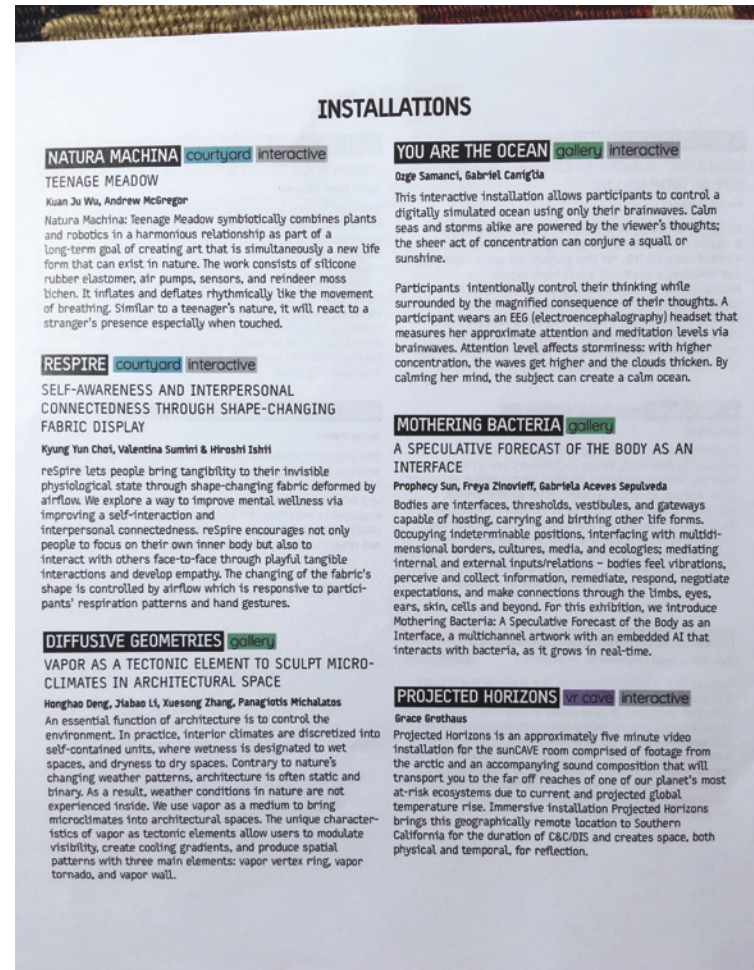


Figure 78. *prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, Mothering Bacteria, 2019. Exhibition Program.*

4.5.4.2 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition Floor Plan

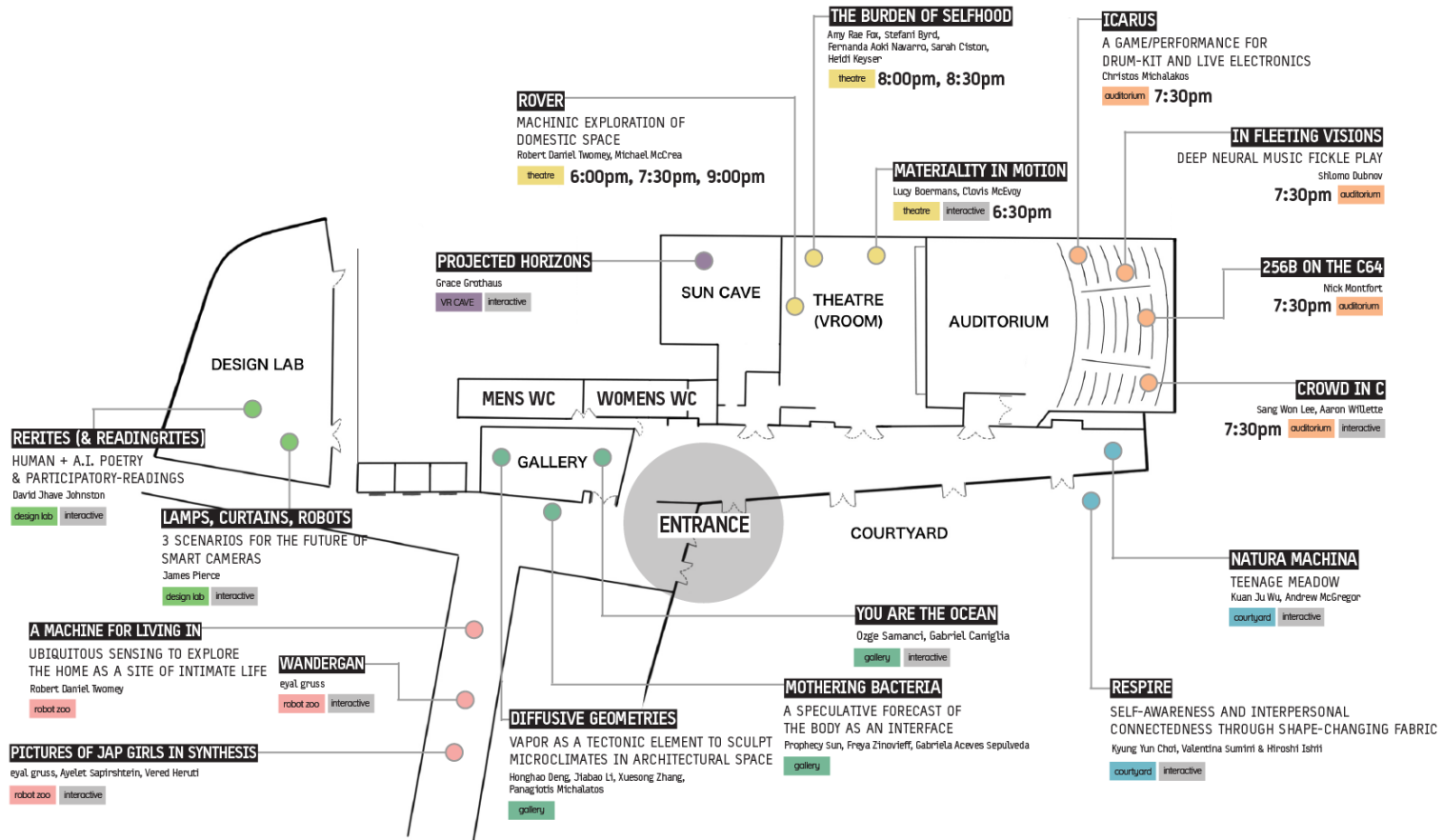


Figure 79. prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepulveda, Mothering Bacteria, 2019. Exhibition layout.

4.5.4.3 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Website Call: November 15, 2018

'ECOLOGIES OF TRANSFORMATION'

The "interface" is dead. It depended upon distinctions between elements that needed some intermediation. This was always an illusion, but it served some purpose for a time in simplifying design tasks while more substantial system ecologies developed. But we were never separate from systems that needed an interface, and now, the idea that the interface mediates interactions between us and computational systems misses almost the entire mark as human interactions, computational devices and the world become ever more entangled into social, economic, political, and environmental relations. A better concept might be the interlace. We are inherently intertwined with myriad systems with myriad agencies. And most of these systems are not primarily about us, and we just live there. Some of these conditions are better engaged with enhanced visibility and cogence, and for others, it makes no difference.

We seek activities in art, design and other unnamable phenomena that give us some indication of what this might look/feel/smell/taste/sound like (or exist on some other carrier wave). We are looking for pointers (art, performance, sound) towards our condition that arises from the many interactions in, and foldings across, complex systems that transcend scales of time, space, materiality, cognition and logics. Maybe interfaces haven't died, they've just fractally multiplied and become pervasive at all levels, becoming the fabric of our material/computational/biotic phenomena. Help us come to grip. Submit your work that indicates, clarifies and problematizes this condition.

Opportunities and infrastructures:

Works can be in a variety of forms such as interactive installations, virtual and/or augmented realities, experimental cinematic shorts, performances and/or works that are suited to special technological platforms that will be part of the exhibition venue. You should indicate in your application the environmental needs of your work, i.e. needs to be in the dark/light, listens to sound/makes sound, can be outdoors, has a time duration, it runs once, it loops, etc.

The exhibition will take place in Atkinson Hall home of the Qualcomm Institute, the UC San Diego home of the California Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technologies (CallIT2). We will look for work that can take advantage of the multiple spaces in this venue which include:

- A 900 square foot white-walled gallery,*
- An atrium and outdoor patio,*
- A black box with a 78 gigapixel, 40 foot long x 10 foot tall, tiled display wall,*
- An auditorium with 8K projection, 32 channels of surround sound and a stage for performances in the auditorium. 200 seats,*
- A virtual reality room, the Sun-CAVE, made from 32 4K stereo video panels.*

If your work is specifically for one of these spaces, please indicate. For these specialized technologies, we will have additional interaction with selected artists for a period of time before the conference.

To submit:

We are accepting two forms of submissions; 1) submissions of existing works and 2) proposals for doing work with the specialized infrastructure available at the venue (the Sun-CAVE, black box display wall, 8K projection in the auditorium).

Existing works: Submit a 2-10 page extended abstract PDF through the PCS submission system including links to a visual portfolio of the artwork, including images and video for time-based work. Include a one-page narrative description of the piece, specifying both its conceptual goals and its functional operations. On another page, provide all of its technical and logistical requirements, including equipment needed, whether you are providing that equipment, space requirements, including any special auditory, lighting or other physical need, time needed for set-up, and whether the piece needs to be staffed during the exhibition.

Proposed works: Submit a 2-10 page extended abstract PDF through the PCS submission system with a proposal for leveraging the existing infrastructure making sure to include the proposed description of current state of the project (~2 pages), any existing documentation of the work in other forms, and a proposed development path.

For either form of submission, we ask for a PDF in SIGCHI extended abstract format (templates available [here](#)) that will be a part of proceedings for this exhibition. The extended abstract should be 2-10 pages.

All selected artists will get a free day of registration for both conferences. We can also provide limited funding for travel and practical expenses related to the exhibition pieces.

4.5.4.4 The 12th Conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition Label: June 25, 2019

Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface

By prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves Sepulveda

Bodies are interfaces, thresholds, vestibules, and gateways capable of hosting, carrying and birthing other life forms. Occupying indeterminable positions, interfacing with multidimensional borders, cultures, media, and ecologies; mediating internal and external inputs/relations—bodies feel vibrations, perceive and collect information, remediate, respond, negotiate expectations, and make connections through the limbs, eyes, ears, skin, cells and beyond. For this exhibition, we introduce *Mothering Bacteria: A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface* (2019), a multichannel artwork with an embedded AI that interacts with bacteria, as it grows in real-time (see Fig. 72-74).

prOphecy sun is a Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University. Her interdisciplinary performance practice threads together both conscious and unconscious choreographies, sound and environment to create exploratory works that invoke deep body memory.

Freya Zinovieff is an artist and student in cMAS (critical MediArtStudio), Simon Fraser University. Her work explores the potential for digital audio technologies to reimagine the contrary temporal narratives of digital media, deep, and cyclical conceptualizations of time.

Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda is an Assistant Professor at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University, where she directs the interdisciplinary research and media creation studio cMAS (criticalMediArtStudio). She has produced various multimedia installations that explore the body as a site of cultural and bio-political inscriptions.

MOTHERING BACTERIA

A Speculative Forecast of the Body as an Interface
 Prophecy Sun, Freya Zinovieff, Gabriela Aceves Sepúlveda

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Prophecy Sun is a Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University. Her interdisciplinary performance practice threads together both conscious and unconscious choreographies, sound and environment to create exploratory works that invoke deep body memory. <https://vimeo.com/prophecysun>

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ECOLOGIES OF TRANSFORMATION
 an Exhibition for the
 2019 ACM Conferences
 Creativity & Cognition and
 Designing Interactive Systems

Figure 80. prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, Mothering Bacteria, 2019. Exhibition label.

4.5.4.5 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Call: October 01, 2018

Securing Paradise: Borders, Human and Nonhuman Intersections

<https://asle.submittable.com/submit/126718/securing-paradise-borders-human-and-nonhuman-intersections>

Organizer: Emily C Vazquez-Enriquez (ecv27@cornell.edu), Cornell University

Planned Format: Traditional Panel (4 Presenters)

Wendy Brown argues that “nation-state walling responds in part, to psychic fantasies, anxieties, and wishes”. Such fantasies encompass the idea of a geopolitical paradise where racial and economic privilege, security, and prosperity can be either achieved or preserved by containment walls. Physical border structures are often seen as measures that can stop people perceived as impediments to upkeep that fantasy. Yet, while border-securitization procedures fail to block human migration, they do stop nonhuman migrants and provoke extensive harm to the environment.

When talking about the ecological perils faced during the Anthropocene, Hillary Cunningham asserts that border studies should not remain aloof to the increasingly severe environmental decay accompanying it. Border structures and bordering practices have active roles in the intricacies of environmental detriments,

as Cunningham emphasizes, “in geopolitical terms, ecological regions do not neatly coincide with international territorial borders, creating a set of signal disjunctures between ‘environment’ and ‘political borders.’” Built barriers tend to fragment migratory corridors often necessary for the survival of endangered species; surveilling and patrolling activities in wild areas disrupt nonhuman modes of sustenance and routines; physical borders can aggravate floods and change the course of rivers; human migrants are often forced to face the dangers of crossing wild landscapes such as rivers, the ocean, the desert, or the jungle.

This panel welcomes papers that address intersections between border studies and the environmental humanities. Potential points of inquiry might be: How does literature, cinema and other creative practices account for environmental degradation when portraying borders? What forms do writers mobilize to assess the intersections between human and nonhuman agents situated in cross-border movements? Can nonhuman migrants be fictionalized not just as a way to expose human suffering, but their own? In what ways are hopes for a borderless world framed not just as a human concern? What are the entanglements between borders and extinction? How can border narratives challenge our notions of what it means to be human?

Topics might also include:

- Environmental racism
- Multi-species and interspecies relations
- Speculative Fiction
- Race and animal studies
- Borders and animality
- Borders in Cli-Fi
- Ableism and speciesism in border contexts
- Posthumanism

Figure 81. Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Call: Website artifact, 2018.

4.5.4.6 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Submission: Dec 15, 2018

Mothering Bacteria: Shifting Borderlands in Algorithmic Spaces

By Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff

Abstract

Mothering Bacteria is an artistic collaboration with an AI that interacts with bacteria as it grows in real-time. AI is an entity and species that lives and multiplies purely in digital spaces, however, artificial agents are now inserted into every aspect of human life and culture. Through an account of *Mothering Bacteria*, this paper explores the material-politics of algorithmic spaces to reveal the complex borderlands of the self in relationship to technology. We draw attention to AI as an actor through which political and ethical questions of how self and other are constructed, become highlighted in the borderlands between the digital and the biological. We also draw attention to mothering: a conscious, continual, mediated act of cultivation that takes every part of our bodies—from hosting, birthing and then minding. Symbolically, motherhood is seen as a natural stage in a women’s life and considered beyond discussion (Holmes, 2006). Yet, acts of mothering require attention, patience, reframing, and an engagement on all levels of perception. These relationships are complex, interactive and entangled, akin with what Thom Van Dooren et al. describe as a multispecies relationship made up of deep histories, continually re-forming into something new (Dooren et al., 2016). Or, what Iwana Masaki describes as a process of extricating pure life from our bodies into translated spaces that are beyond conscious moments, revealing more-than-human potentialities (Masaki, 2002). *Mothering Bacteria* cultivates an interactive space between the bacteria and the AI, and situates the female body as host in an environment constantly entangled in the production of *Self* and *Other*. The work provides a speculative forecast of the time in which algorithms demarcate the boundaries between the biological and the digital, thus illuminating the porous borders between the human and the nonhuman in the creation of something new.

4.5.4.7 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Rehearsal: June 17, 2019



Figure 82. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Rehearsal. Photo courtesy of Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda.

MY PRESENTATION NOTES: June 17, 2019

- Deliver the paper in a performative way
- Use white fabric in an orchestrated and purposeful way to emulate a border
- Make use of costumes
- Position bodies on either side of the screen
- Clear the floor space
- Use iPads instead of paper notes
- Subtle movement and support each other
- Keep the sound low on the video to ensure speaking voices are heard
- Alternate who speaks
- Take turns moving with fabric
- Try slower and rhythmic movements instead of fast ones
- Controlled lighting
- Edit video so there is a single figure on screen vs. three bodies
- Create a language of movement that we can both emulate and act out

4.5.4.8 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Set-Up: June 29, 2019



Figure 83. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Set-up at ASLE 2019.

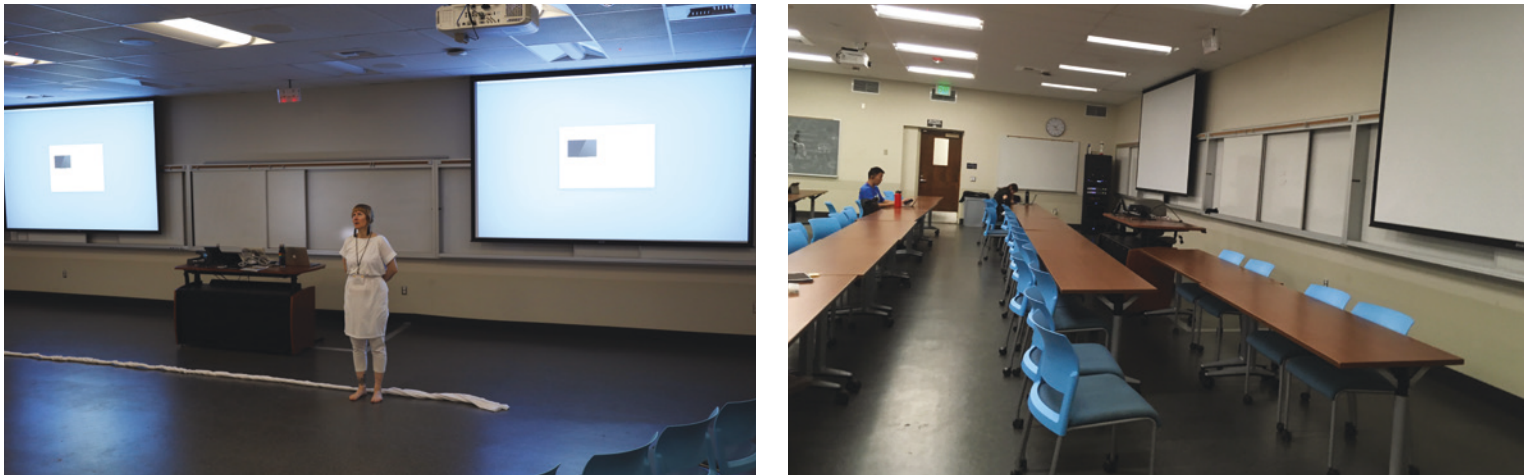


Figure 84. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Set-up at ASLE 2019.

NOTES

Set-up

- Change into costumes
- Install white fabric strip along the floor
- Re-arrange the classroom tables and chairs
- Create a circular formation
- Adjust the room lighting
- Set up the projector
- Set up sound equipment
- Set up camera and iPad

4.5.4.9 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference Presentation: June 29, 2019

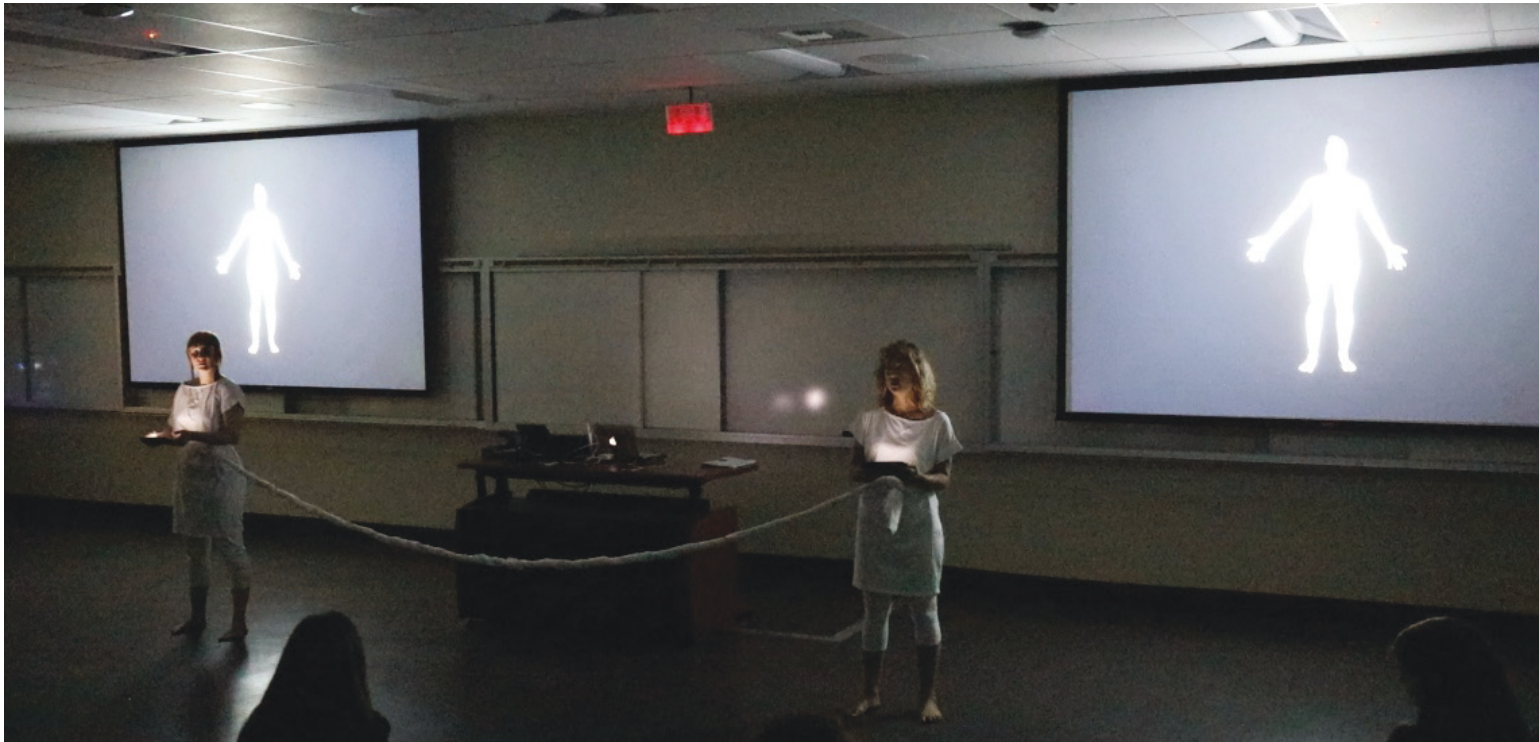


Figure 85. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Video still from presentation.



Figure 86. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria*, 2019. Video stills from presentation.



Figure 87. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria* (2019). Creative shoot at UC Davis for ASLE 2019.



Figure 88. *prOphecy sun*, Freya Zinovieff, and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, *Mothering Bacteria* (2019). Creative shoot at UC Davis for ASLE 2019.

MY JOURNAL NOTES: June 29, 2019

- Post ASLE performance create a series of physical explorations in the campus
- Reuse the existing costume
- Create movement whilst tethered together through a long fabric cord.
- Shoot the pieces in various indoor and outdoor locations throughout the conference campus. The movements were performed in front and interact with buildings, landscape and pedestrians

4.5.5 Critical Media Art Studio Email Conversation with Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda/Freya Zinoveiff: July 22, 2019

This following text is from an email conversation with collaborators Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda and Freya Zinovieff and I that was subsequently edited and posted on the School of Interactive Arts and Technology's (SIAT) Critical Media Studio Website on July 22, 2019. The text below describes our reflections on presenting our research about the female body as a multispecies animal at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Conference (ASLE) in 2019. At the conference Freya Zinovieff and I co-chaired a panel and presented our paper "*Mothering Bacteria: Shifting Borderlands in Algorithmic Spaces*," in an unconventional and performative format.

Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda is an interdisciplinary media artist and cultural historian with a research focus in Latin American media art history. She is an Assistant Professor at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University, where she leads the critical MediaArtsStudio. And, Freya Zinovieff is a graduate student at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University, Canada. Her research looks at the entanglements between technologies, species and the Earth System, specifically in Borderlands, through the creation of Speculative Sonic Fictions; ethnographies that illuminate the boundaries between the political, the biological and the ecological.

Freya Zinoveiff is an artist and Ph.D. student at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology at Simon Fraser University, Canada. Her research looks at the entanglements between technologies, species, and the Earth System, specifically in Borderlands, through the creation of Speculative Sonic Fictions; ethnographies that illuminate the boundaries between the political, the biological, and the ecological.

Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda (GAS): What is ASLE?

prOphecy sun (PS) and Freya Zinovieff (FZ): ASLE stands for the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. It is one of the premier conferences in the Environmental Humanities. Truly interdisciplinary, the conference attracts professors, scholars, artists, and activists from environmental science, justice, academia, education, literature, art, and technology.

GAS: How was the experience at ASLE conference different or similar to other conferences that you have attended in the past—particularly those that are not humanities-based?

PS/FZ: We co-chaired a panel titled, "Securing Paradise: Borders, Human and Nonhuman Intersections." The panel was diverse and featured scholars from Harvard and Faculty Fellows from Environmental and Animal Studies at NYU. Secondly, the conference program was extensive and diverse with many sessions, outings and social events overlapping one another.

We decided to present our research in an interdisciplinary performative manner, which was quite experimental, in both the performance itself and the pedagogical process around the presentation. We also had to be strategic and prioritize our time between research, connecting with mentors and peers, rehearsing and practicing the presentation, and preparing for our panel facilitation.

GAS: What did you present in ASLE?

PS/FZ: We presented a performative presentation titled *Mothering Bacteria: Shifting Borderlands in Algorithmic Spaces*. The work was an iteration of an ongoing research project between prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff, Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda, and Steve Di Paola.

Inspired by an ongoing drive to complicate traditional academic formats, and explore the intersections of creative practice and research, the piece was an interdisciplinary adaptation combining audiovisual projections, butoh inspired movement, costumes, technology, and light.

We reassembled the room by moving all the chairs and tables to

the edge of the room and created a larger performance space, demarcated by a semi-circle of chairs. We also placed a long white cord along the floor from one end of the performance space to the other (see Fig. 83-84). This instantly made space for something out of the ordinary to happen. We turned all the lights off too and performed the work lit only by the screens of our iPads and the flash and movement of the video behind us.

GAS: How was your experimentation with a performative delivery of a paper like, and how did the audience respond to it?

As this was a completely new thing for us, and the rest of the conference presentations followed a traditional academic format, we were not sure what the response would be. However, the audience response was fantastic! The room became very silent when we performed, and the questions at the end were thoughtful and provoking. It actually made us reflect on how some presentations can be quite dry, so when you do something differently, it can be a welcome relief to the audience, and something that will stick in their minds.

GAS: How does this presentation relate to your practice as artists and scholars? Do you see these two practices as different or how do they come together?

PS/FZ: This presentation relates to both of our practices in a multitude of ways. First, there was a ritualistic element to the way we conducted the performance. For example, from the placement of the chairs and the way we used light, to the ritualistic movements we enacted with each other and with the long cord that connected us. And lastly, to the way we alluded to the agency within the digital technologies that we used by lighting our bodies with them. In both the written and performative element of this work, we also aimed to generate space for other voices and open up a discourse around power and community-making practices.

FZ: While this is unlike anything I have done before, my art practice is very much about ritual, both as a performance, but also as a way to honour the material agency of the tools I use to create

work and the final product. The work also relates to my scholarly practice, for its intent at generosity and inclusivity. My initial training as an academic taught me that hard critique is the way to get ideas across, and more, to be further valued as a scholar. While critique is obviously necessary in order to build our ideas into something original, I think there is space for more generosity in academic discourse. I am really inspired by the work of Donna Haraway, Eve Sedgwick, and others who, through their writing, practice ways to celebrate rather than tear down. It is a completely different way of going about research, and I really liked how we cultivated this paradigm in all aspects of the work. The work relates to both parts of my research and creative practice. I am still finding ways to merge the two together as, for me, they occupy rather different brain spaces. However, this work is a good attempt, I think, of merging the performative with the written.

PS: My practice is interdisciplinary, and I see these two practices as the same or mirroring each other. For example, I use a combination of ritualistic, improvisational, chance inspired reflections and sound and movement explorations to explore and realize moments. I mesh *making-thinking-doing*, or research-creation approaches, to explore and define new potent fields of possibility—where new propositions, materialist sensibilities, and alternative methods of inquiry can co-emerge and validate in-between, threshold moments of performance.

GAS: What did you learn from this experience?

PS/FZ: We learned a lot about how to work together under pressure. We discovered that we have a great synergy when it comes to getting things done as a team and remaining flexible when the conditions are not as expected. For example, we had prepared to present a film in a room with one screen. However, our allotted room had two screens! So, we improvised within the space we were given and made the best of each opportunity and challenge that developed. In the end, the presentation turned out better than we could have expected.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we also had the opportunity to step into the role of chairing the panel. This was a very

informative experience with regards to the best way to time presentations, questions and answers. It gave us both direct experience and fresh ideas about how to chair future panels, and again, was a great exercise in how to collaborate.

GAS: What was the most inspiring thing about this conference?

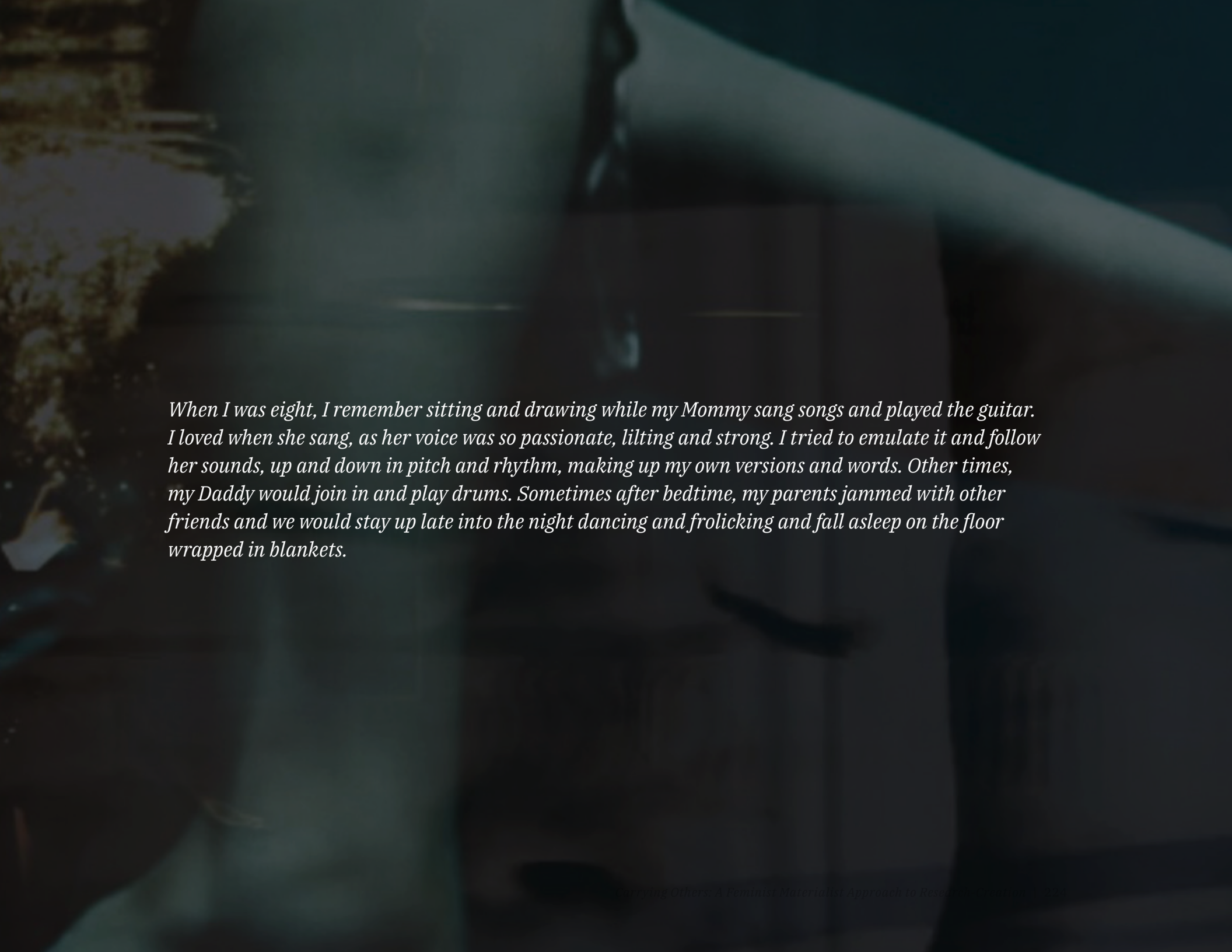
PS/FZ: The conference was hugely interdisciplinary, which meant that we were rubbing shoulders with scholars working in a variety of fields. One of the most exciting things about this was seeing how many people are thinking about the Anthropocene (used here as an umbrella term for the mass changes taking place to earth and its inhabitants, due to carbon-fuelled capitalism). In this

way, not just thinking about the Anthropocene, but working to affect real change through their work and living lifestyles that represent a commitment to living ecologically.

It was also really inspiring to witness some of the scholar's talks, whose work we have been reading about for so long. For instance, Ursula Heise, one of the scholars at the forefront of critical Anthropocene discourses, was there talking about the cultural meanings of endangered species. Melissa K. Nelson, who recently gave an incredible talk about how Traditional Ecological Knowledge can impart crucial practices for troubled times.

INTERLUDE

*Memories of
Music and Breath*



When I was eight, I remember sitting and drawing while my Mommy sang songs and played the guitar. I loved when she sang, as her voice was so passionate, lilting and strong. I tried to emulate it and follow her sounds, up and down in pitch and rhythm, making up my own versions and words. Other times, my Daddy would join in and play drums. Sometimes after bedtime, my parents jammed with other friends and we would stay up late into the night dancing and frolicking and fall asleep on the floor wrapped in blankets.



Figure 89. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #10, 2020.

4.6 *Floating in the In-Between*

Medium

15-minute live performance and 2-channel installation

Location

Oxygen Art Centre, Nelson BC

Materials

Plastic, fabric, pins, projectors, costume, line 6 pedal, pitch shift pedal, voice, field recordings

Curator

Genevieve Robertson

Photography

prOphecy sun, Genevieve Robertson

Link

<https://prophecysun.com/Floating-in-the-in-between>



This section presents *Floating in the In-Between* (2019), a two-channel installation and 15-minute live performance that was shown at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson BC on May 30-31, 2019. The piece was created in response to Ruth Bieber’s play, *To See or Not to See* (2019). The piece was shown in conjunction with Bieber’s play in front of a live audience in the gallery atrium.

This work explores the theoretical orientations of Feminist Materialism, the Optical Unconscious and the Technological Unconscious, and takes up the subtheme Breath—the movement between body and environment and a process which air moves in and out of the body.

The following pages present this artwork and aspects of Carriance through digital ephemera, which includes exhibition and performance documentation, interview text, posters and press material, process shots, and a reflection.

Previous page: Figure 90. prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. Video Still. Installation and live 15-minute audio/visual performance.

4.6.1 Oxygen Art Centre Performance and Sound Composition Documentation: May 30, 2019



Figure 91. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. Performance view.*

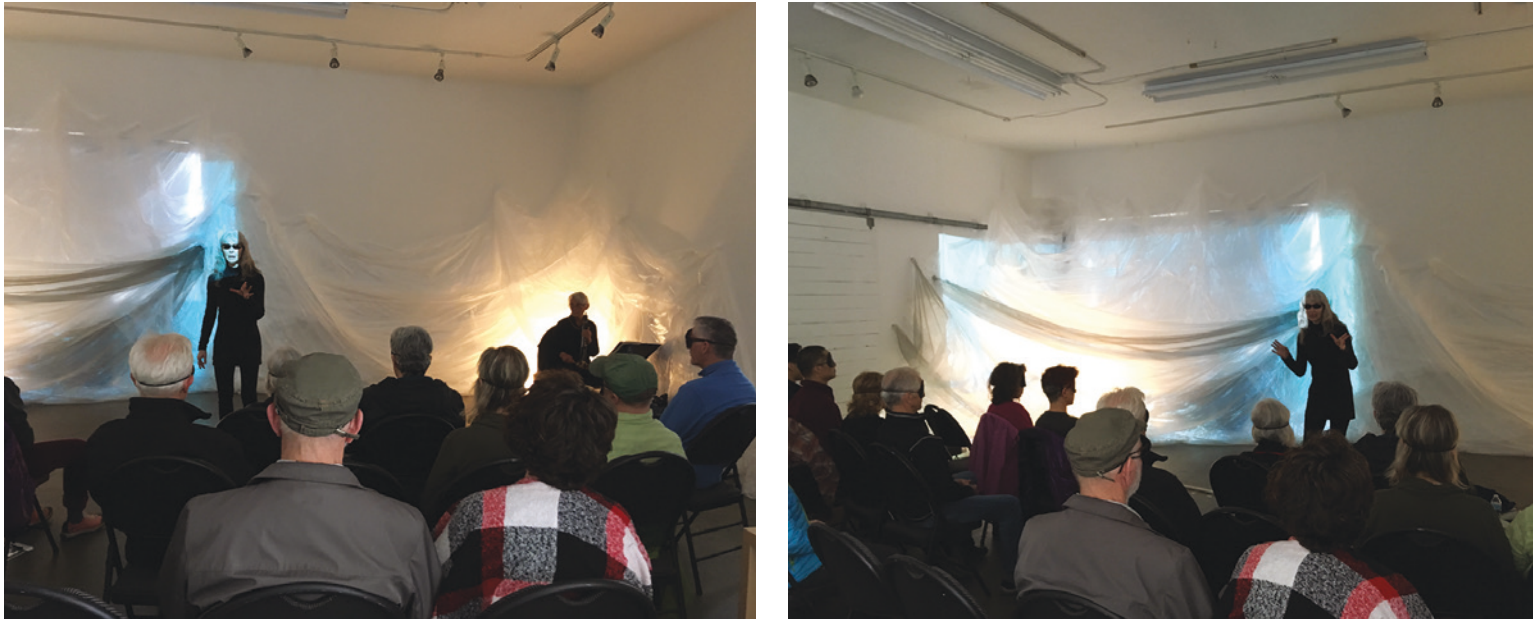


Figure 92. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. Performance view.*

PERFORMANCE NOTES: MAY 30, 2019

- Start performance seated inside the cocoon space
- Listen for cue to start
- Imagine I am floating in water and emulate that in vocal tones, dips
- Build and fade out softly
- Finish by climbing out of space on the ground and exit the stage

4.6.2 Reflection

In line with other artworks discussed earlier in this chapter such as *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), and *Mothering Bacteria* (2019), *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) contributes to Feminist Materialist Research-Creation by acknowledging the multitude of approaches to feminist collaboration, relationality, dialogue and Carriance—as both an action and concept.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Feminist Materialist Research-Creation is complex and multifaceted and invites re-conceptions of the term Carriance, ways of making and collaboration. This section explores the nuances of care in relation to *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) a two-channel immersive installation and 15-minute live performance that was exhibited and performed at Oxygen Art Centre on May 30-31, 2019.

This research demonstrates levels of Carriance through feminist collaboration and what Alaimo and Hekman assert as, “matter [being] crucial for every aspect of feminist thought” (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008, 8). Carriance here is articulated and reconceptualized through many material and immaterial forms of care work that include interview, phone conversations, preparatory documentation, notes and live performance. Care considered this way, as both a force and as a disruptor, is “distributed across a multiplicity of agencies and materials [that] supports our worlds as a thick mesh of relational obligation” (Bellacasa, 2017, 20). In this framework, Carriance becomes a vital and salient way to understand how essential collaboration is to artistic production. In particular, how care work has the “potential to disrupt the status quo and to un-hinge some of the moral rigidities of ethical questioning” (Bellacasa, 2017, 11).

The following pages highlight some of the aspects of artistic production. I argue that it is this kind of collectivity and dynamism

that decentres the single voice, lifts up, strengthens newness, and promotes reflexivity. I see these as integral elements of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation. This is exemplified in the nuanced relationships I had with the Executive Director, and curator, Genevieve Robertson, and with the playwright and actress, Ruth Bieber, through a series of email, phone and in-person conversations. I mention these interactions because they were both critical in the formative processes of the making of the artwork. I also would like to stress how care was offered through financial support to cover the cost of travel, supplies, and artistic assistance, and how care was reciprocated over multiple in person, email and phone conversations.

This project turned out to be more complicated than I initially thought possible. For instance, the focus of the project grew from my initial connection with the Robertson. Subsequently, I developed a mentor-like relationship with Bieber while in the creative process of formulating the original framework for the piece.

Bieber and I met several times over the phone to discuss some of my ideas. Things organically shifted after I had seen her compelling play, *To See or Not to See* (2019) in person in Creston, B.C. This evolving process inspired further ideas and directives about blindness, seeing beyond the limbs, in particular, it helped me to take time to develop a cohesive response to her maternal stories of postpartum isolation and desperation. I was especially drawn to two segments of her story, the first in which a mother suffering from severe post-partum depression has difficulties navigating reality and forgets about her baby in boiling water in a home-made bathtub on top of a stove, and the second, in which the protagonist climbs a mountain pass with no visual sight (see Fig. 92).

While operating somewhat differently from earlier artworks, this piece explores various forms of care and reflections on Bieber’s play through conversation, connection, live performance, material objects, imagery, storytelling, sound, and digital projection (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). The goal of this artwork was to 1) highlight the In-between spaces in live performance and sound;

2) honour and give voice to female perspectives on depression; and 3) account for various forms of corporal awareness—a place of floating where the body, mind and subconscious moments meld together.

The artwork takes up Feminist Materialist practice notions of materiality, bodies and technology, and inspiration from Loveless' manifesto on creative practice, which states that Research-Creation practices are divergent, with overlapping tensions (Mondloch, 2018; Loveless, 2020). In particular, this research draws heavily on Lena Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee's text "Manifesto for Maternal Performance (Art) 2016!" which explores reflective ways of negotiating socially constructed, ritualized performances and gender (Šimic and Underwood-Lee, 2018). For example, in the process and performance of *Floating in the In-Between* (2019, I played with aspects such as breath, stories, and performance through interdisciplinary means that included sound, moving images and installation.

Another approach I took was to explore Carriance though conceptual and material form that would hold or give space for the multiple stories in Ruth Bieber's play. For instance, I enveloped the gallery space with cascading sheets of fabric and plastic to mimic mountains, air and the movement between bodies and water (see Fig. 96, 97, and 98). To explore and echo these notions, I transformed the Oxygen Arts Centre venue into an immersive sensory experience that consisted of a large-scale installation, multiple projections, and an amplified 15-minute live improvised sound performance (see Fig. 91-92). For example, to emulate the images of the mountains, I gathered, wove and hung recycled plastic and sheer fabric strips across three walls and lit the material with a mix of filtered spotlights and blue and white gels. The installation consists of a 20 x 15-foot span of plastic floating mountains, and fabric cascading in between mounted onto the gallery walls and floor. Each section melds into the next mountain and sets the backdrop for the two projections. I installed two projections on the floor and from the ceiling that played beside and onto the surface of the fabric and plastic.

The first projection arrests the viewer with imagery of a female form submersed in deep water. The figure repeatedly tried to swim to the surface, yet is caught, and cannot escape the waters engulfment. Her body repeatedly moves back-and-forth (see Fig. 92). The imagery is ghost-like and the tones are reminiscent of comforting pillows. The looping imagery shows the image of the woman eventually being carried and held in the water's embrace.

The second projection is an enlarged iteration of the first projection. The visuals are positioned over the plastic mountains and move in slow motion, unfolding and melding together. The multisensory piece elicits viewers to negotiate reality by transporting them elsewhere, into other places. Ultimately, to witness a woman trapped in her own mind—caught between body, water and subconscious rhythms.

To compliment the installation and imagery, I created an atmospheric composition using an assortment of consumer grade pedals such as a mixer, pitch shift, delay and looping pedals, a microphone, and a monitor. The improvised score is made up of a series of low breathing tones, layered vocal tones and harmonies and field recordings of water in 10 to 30 second time increments. The sounds shift in cadence, tone and granulate and stretch as I weave together a tapestry of harmonic and dissonant drones.

Building on Haraway's arguments on posthumanistic relationality and Braidotti's ideas on nomadic systems of temporality (transitioning between technology systems, networks, and place), *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) demonstrates a Feminist Materialist approach to creative praxis in which the resulting sounds become reminiscent of the moving images and act as an elegiac effort to transcend darkness (see Fig. 94-95). Similar to Braidotti's ideas on locations being, "materialist temporal and spatial site of co-production," this research presents an expanded way of viewing feminist perspectives on depression (Braidotti, 2006, 199). I also foreground choices such as not of being front and center during the performance. Instead, I chose to remain shrouded and hidden behind fabric, plastic and technologies.

This choice honoured the sensitive material and stories that were conveyed from Bieber's play. I see this act as space giving, as a form of Carriance, and arguably a feminist sensibility that gives room for other potentialities and new encounters to exist (Braidotti, 2014). This sensibility does not separate the subject from the whole. Instead, this approach makes space for other moments to breathe, leave traces or remnants, and for others to exist and thrive. As Braidotti further posits, our relationships are connected to a location, "activated by the resisting thinker against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2006, 199). In this way, I see this strategy of Carriance as an essential part of Feminist Materialist practice because it extends the boundaries beyond the limbs and the body.

The next section introduces, *Carrying Others* (2019), a three-channel audio and video installation that was collaboratively created and produced with Reese Muntean. This artwork foregrounds relational acts of co-becoming and systems of co-existence and takes up new technologies, inflatable forms and flâneuse sensibilities of liberating and embracing new methods of creative experimentation and dissemination.

4.6.3 Oxygen Art Centre Curatorial Statement: May 30, 2019

To See or Not to See

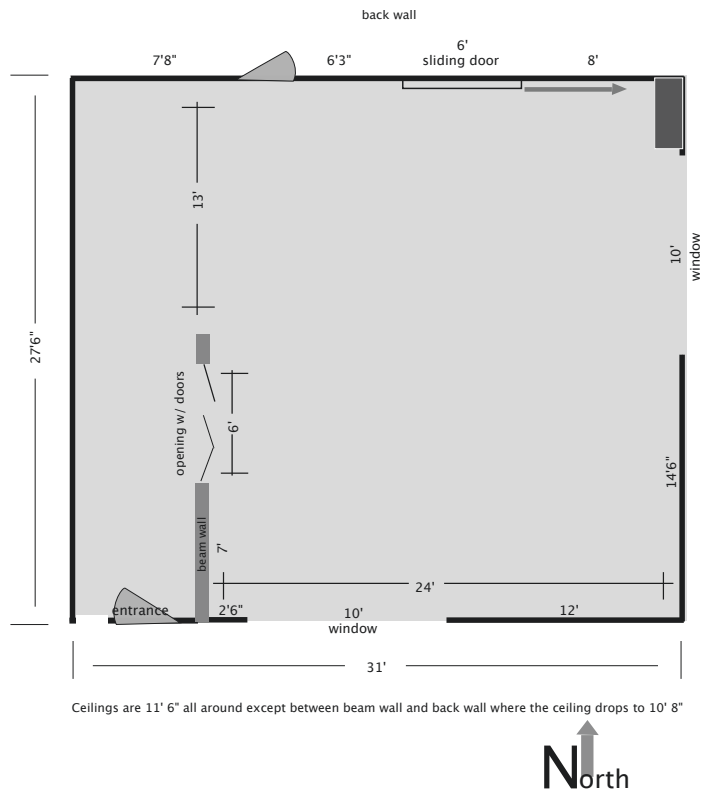
By Genevieve Robertson

To See or Not to See is a unique one-woman performance by writer and theatre artist Ruth Bieber. This play is a powerful story of wounding, overcoming, courage, and healing. Employing the circular motif of a shamanic quest as frame, Ruth Bieber's first play is full of insight about what it's like to have a vision disability as a child, a woman, a mother and a professional—and about the more hidden disabilities of those around her. Interdisciplinary artist prOphecy sun will accompany Bieber with an opening performance called *Floating in the In-Between*, composed in response to Bieber's story. *To See or Not to See* is co-hosted by Oxygen Art Centre and the Capitol Theatre and will take place at Oxygen Art Centre on Saturday March 30th at 7pm, and Sunday March 31st at 2pm.

Bieber's multimedia, solo show takes us into the story of one woman's courageous and soul-searching journey of adventure, discovery, and ultimate forgiveness. For the 1.5-hour duration of the piece, audience members can choose to either watch the play, or be immersed in their other senses with the help of a blindfold. Nicholas Jones of Calgary writes, "Thrown into Ruth's world, into a string of narratives that tied key pieces of her life together, delicately woven but powerfully expressed, *To See or Not To See: Homecoming*" left a lasting impression and I never even saw it. Instead, I found myself fully immersed and along for a journey, that felt exposed and dangerous at times, delicate and intimate at other moments, and overall, deeply moving. Truly, we cannot know how another fully experiences life if we rely so heavily on what we see" (2018).

Floating in the In-Between is an interdisciplinary performance by prOphecy sun made in response to Ruth Bieber's powerful story *To See or Not to See*, 2019. The 15-minute piece conjures up images of fragmented, reflective still waters, woven together through an atmospheric composition consisting of looping, suspended textures, sounds, processed vocal tones, and field recordings. Complimenting the sound is a visual tapestry of projections. The multisensory piece elicits viewers to negotiate reality by transporting them elsewhere, into other places where the body, mind and subconscious moments meld together.

4.6.4 Oxygen Art Centre Exhibition Space and Floor Plan



oxygen floor plan

Figure 93. Oxygen Art Centre Floor Plan, 2019. Courtesy of website.

4.6.5 Project Log: April 24, 2019

4.6.5.1. The Making: In Process Video Stills



Figure 94. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between*, 2019. Video Stills.



Figure 95. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. Video stills.*

4.6.5.2 The Making

MY NOTES: FEBRUARY 04, 2019

- Email and call Ruth Bieber about her process
- Arrange travel and go see her play on February 10 at the Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Creston, B.C.
- Scout her show for movement and placement of props
- Create soundscore on her story
- Respond to her themes: 1) baby in bathwater 2) mother frozen & depression 3) climbing mountains
- Create sound composition and installation in response to these themes
- Keep the work ambient so that it sets the stage for Ruth's work
- Create space for Ruth's musician to play with small instruments
- Leave enough floor space for the rope

4.6.5.3 The Making: Oxygen Art Centre Installation: May 30, 2019



Figure 96. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. In process shot.*



Figure 97. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between*, 2019. *In process shots.*

THE MAKING: MY JOURNAL NOTES: MAY 1-30, 2019

To Do

- Scout gallery space
- Collect/purchase plastic and fabric rolls and materials
- Find shimmering fabric
- Find clear and translucent plastic that can hold shape and form
- Purchase tape, push pins
- Light bulbs
- Extension cords

Setup

- Set up the ladder, tape, scissors, and materials
- Unroll and begin attaching to the walls
- Ensure all fabric and plastic is not touching electrical surfaces
- Attach to adjacent walls and other surfaces
- Set up small portable Pico projector
- Hang large overhead projector from the ceiling with help from Ian at Oxygen
- Reformat video files to play in large projector
- Set music pedals, mixer, microphone
- Turn off lights
- Rearrange chairs in the room into a semi-circle



Figure 98. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between, 2019. In process shots.*



Figure 99. *prOphecy sun, Floating in the In-Between*, 2019. *In process shots.*

4.6.6 Oxygen Art Centre Show Program: May 30, 2019

Show Program

In 2008, while living in Calgary, playwright Ruth Bieber wrote the original script titled 'To See Or Not To See'. Gordon Pengilly mentored the original script-writing then, and now, ten years later, provides dramaturgical support for the new incarnation. "It's a full circle experience, and feels like coming home," says Bieber. Between then and now, the original script enjoyed three readings (Calgary, New York and finally Kelowna; where the ultimate 14 actor ensemble production also took place in 2016). "Artistic dream come true," says Bieber. The current project that is the solo, multimedia creation offers Bieber and creative assistant, an opportunity as a duo to spread their artistic wings. The essence of the very personal memoir always has been about healing through forgiveness; using the backdrop of the vision quest in the original script was thought of as both imaginative and a staging marvel, as indicated by the ensemble production.

The use of the vision quest was, at times, a bit of a distraction, however, from the main theme of forgiveness. For this reason, as well as simple practicality, the vision quest does not take centre stage in the current project. The timeline is less confusing as a result, although the use of some YouTube film clips from the ensemble production offer glimpses. One poem and reflective emails written by Dr. Sterling Haynes have also been added to the Homecoming project, and provide important historical perspective, which supports universal appeal. Sterling is a retired physician, who was a young Doctor in Edmonton and area during the 1950s. His contribution to the Homecoming project lends important cultural context, as well as reason for optimism when considering then and now. "It's not just all about me." Bieber reminds us. Who can't use a little optimism these days? "It's about us all, and reminding ourselves just how lucky we are!" Enjoy the show.

To See or Not to See
a one-woman performance by playwright **Ruth Bieber**
opening act by musician **prophecy sun**

A powerful story of wounding, overcoming, courage, and healing...full of insight about what it's like to have a vision disability as a child, a woman, a mother and a professional - and about the more hidden disabilities of those around her.

Sat March 30th, 7pm & Sun March 31st, 2pm
Oxygen Art Centre #3 320 Vernon Street (Alley Entrance)
Tickets \$15
Co-Hosted by **Capitol Theatre & Oxygen Art Centre**
Buy tickets online at capitoltheatre.ca
Box Office Tuesday-Friday noon-4:30 or by phone 250.352.6363

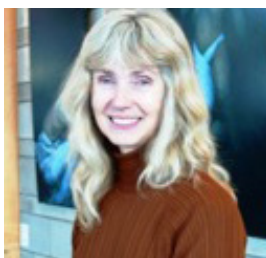
OXYGEN ART CENTRE
320 Vernon St, Nelson BC
250-352-6322
info@oxygenartcentre.org
www.oxygenartcentre.org

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL
Funded by the Government of Canada

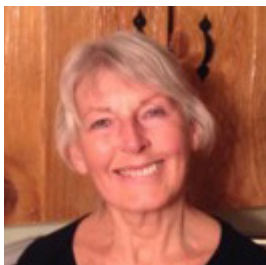
Canada

hp HALL PRINTING **bc touring council** **CAPITOL**

Figure 100. To See or Not to See, 2019. Program.



Ruth Bieber holds a Master's degree in Education, from the University of Calgary, with a specialization in Rehabilitation. Prior to obtaining this degree, her professional focus was as a Counseling Therapist, working with clients with disabilities. This work challenged her to discover more effective therapeutic modalities. To this end, she shifted from traditional, verbal approaches, to the power offered by the arts. In the early 1990s, she founded InsideOut Theatre, which was a reflection of her own evolution from therapy to theatre. Ms Bieber was the Artistic Director of this ground-breaking, integrated Theatre Company for seventeen years, and in 2012 published the book "Disability Theatre from the InsideOut". The book is both practical and theoretical; plus holds great human interest. Ms Bieber has received numerous awards for her specialized work including, YWCA/Global T.V. Woman of Vision (2004), the Euclid Harry award for Leadership (2006), The Donald Norman Award for contribution to the Theatre Arts (2008) and The Spirit of Kelowna for inspiration in promoting diversity within the visual arts community (2011). After relocating to Kelowna, Ms Bieber took her creative inquiry into the visual arts. She began to paint and established a gallery appreciation program for people who are vision impaired. In 2013, with the Kelowna Art Gallery, Ms Bieber curated an exhibition of works by blind and vision impaired artists titled Just Imagine. Ms Bieber produced her play, 'To See Or Not To See,' as a 14-actor ensemble performance, in 2016 while living in Kelowna British Columbia.



Shirley Cameron. Long time singer in community choirs and, more recently, playing recorder, penny whistle, and then EWI (short for electronic wind instrument). Shirley has a part time acupuncture business, volunteers with the Creston Pet Adoption Wellness Society, and is involved in making music in small groups, improv, with friends. All is good.



prOphecy sun is an interdisciplinary performance artist. Her practice threads together both conscious and unconscious choreographies, sound, and environment to create exploratory works that invoke deep body memory. She self-releases music, choreography, compositions, and videos using smartphone technology. Current musical projects include prOphecy sun, Spell and the Vancouver Electronic Ensemble (VEE). Past projects include Tyrana-horse, Her Jazz Noise Collective, Under the Sun, and The Adulthood. She has exhibited and performed at the Arts Commons, Orillia Museum of Art and History, Surrey Art Gallery, One Art Space, Dance in Vancouver, L'alternative: Festival de Cine Independiente de Barcelona, Festival Miden, Unit/Pitt Gallery, Institut für Alles Mögliche, Cinethesia Feminist Film Festival, VIVO Media Arts Centre, the Vancouver Art Gallery, Dancing on the Edge, Fontanelle Gallery, the Vancouver International Jazz Festival. She holds a BFA and MFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

Floating in the In-Between is an interdisciplinary performance by prOphecy sun made in response to Ruth Bieber's powerful story *To See or Not to See*, 2019. The 15-minute piece conjures up images of fragmented, reflective still waters, woven together through an atmospheric composition consisting of looping, suspended textures, sounds, processed vocal tones, and field recordings. Complimenting the sound is a visual tapestry of projections.

The multisensory piece elicits viewers to negotiate reality by transporting them elsewhere, into other places where the body, mind and subconscious moments meld together.

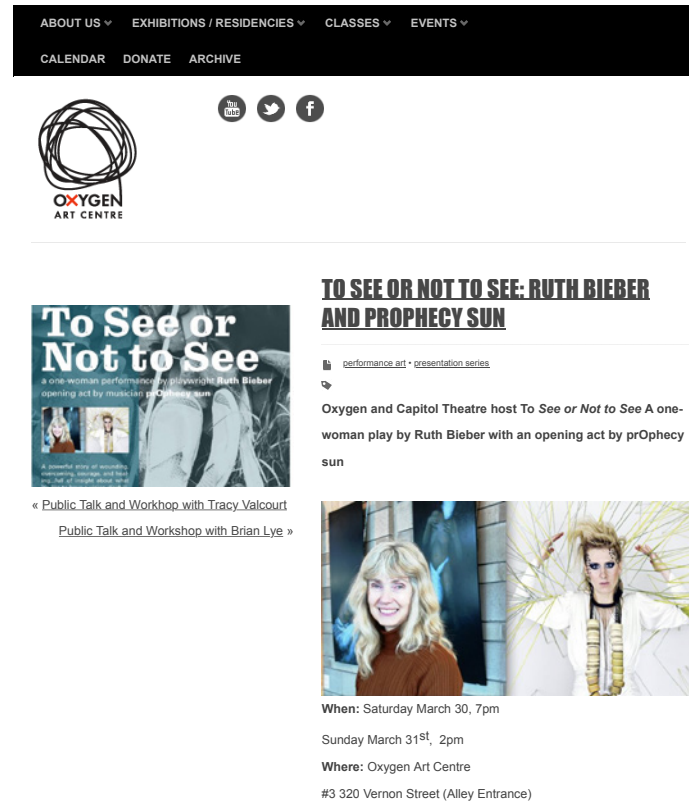
This presentation is made possible through the support of:



4.6.7 Oxygen Art Centre Show Poster: May 2019



Figure 101. prOphecy sun, *Floating in the In-Between*, 2019. Posters.



4.6.8 Conversation with Curator Genevieve Robertson: February 17, 2020

Oxygen Art Centre's former Executive Director and Curator Genevieve Robertson and I initially met in person on a fall afternoon in 2019 to discuss Ruth Bieber's show *To See or Not to See* (2019), and my creative response *Floating in the In-Between* (2019). That initial meeting was fruitful, encouraging and created a meaningful bond that carried over into additional projects such as *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in Their Backyard* (2019), which is further discussed in section eight of this chapter.

The following question and answer style of conversation transpired over email while Robertson was on route to Nepal during the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. What emerges from this text are the themes, ideas and reflections from the 2019 exhibition and performance.

Robertson is a visual artist with a background in environmental studies, and the former Executive Director at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, British Columbia. Her drawings are often composed of fossil, mineral and plant-based pigments collected regionally and map a visceral and long-term engagement with materiality, alterity, and the politics of place.

prOphecy sun (PS): How did you select the artwork for the exhibition?

Genevieve Robertson (GR): The selection of your participation in Ruth Bieber's play and the commission of your accompanying piece *Floating in the In-Between* happened very organically. We imagined that you would be able to create an atmospheric audio/visual installation piece that would enhance Ruth's narrative.

PS: What was the theme of the exhibition?

GR: You were asked to respond to an autobiographical narrative performance written by a playwright about growing up and overcoming the challenges of being blind. Your piece used sound, video and installation to subtly and gently responds to the space

by creating an atmosphere for the playwright's narrative to inhabit. Ruth Bieber's story was about the pain of growing up in a troubled family as a blind child, and the personal journey that led to her success as a mother, writer and community organizer.

PS: What was the format of the exhibition?

GR: The format of the exhibition was a two-night multimedia performance at Oxygen Art Centre in collaboration with Ruth Bieber.

PS: How important is the new media artwork in the exhibition?

GR: Your media practice is central to how the work is produced, installed and exhibited. The media work is in both cases integrated into the space, with other physical elements also central to the overall works.

PS: For you, is there a link between creative work and data? If so, what?

GR: I think that data is essentially information, and artistic researchers are uncovering and producing information simultaneously. While artistic Research-Creation may use less conventional forms of data collecting (AV recording and producing, embodied and studio practice, land-based practices, etc.), artistic researchers produce and discover data as their works are researched, created, produced and disseminated.

PS: How important is the relationship between the artist and the curator?

GR: I think this really depends on the context. Some curators are able, through the support of the institutions that they work at, to be huge supporters of artists, offering guidance, production fees, professional networking support and editorial feedback. In this case, the artist and the curator can be co-creators in a mutual and often longer-term relationship. When galleries are pressed for resources and director/curators are wearing multiple hats, I think the potential for mutual, ongoing supportive relationships is diminished. So, in part, this relationship is defined by the socio-economic status of the gallery and its funding structure: whether

it is locally or nationally funded, whether it is public or private, etc. I think, often, it is a beautiful relationship that involves mutual trust: the curator must trust the process of the artist, and the artist must trust that the curator understands and will present them well.

PS: Do feminist artworks change the gallery spectatorship? If so, how do their interests, process or artworks change the viewership?

GR: I am not sure that I could define a feminist artwork specifically, so this question is challenging to answer as a general question. In terms of your work, I think that your embodied practice and use of multiple, shifting viewpoints and ambient sound is disarming for viewers. Your works affect multiple senses simultaneously, are resonant and have the potential to open viewers up to dreamlike atmospheres where the body is present in a holistic way. Your truly interdisciplinary practice that integrates sound, vocals, movement, and AV technology, in an often de-centralized and atmospheric manner, perhaps gives permission to viewers to have an immersive and sensorial experience.

PS: In what ways do contemporary artists address current issues on technology, spectatorship, climate, visibility or media consumption?

GR: I think Oxygen Art Centre, the artist-run centre where these works took place, is already an unusual Centre, far from what one would often think of as an institutional space. This is probably to do with the fact that it is in a rural setting, is very small, and is outside of a central urban setting. It also focuses on interdisciplinary practice and art education. In this context, your work did not challenge Oxygen as an institution. I think the fact that a tiny artist-run-centre exhibits in a small mountain town in rural British Columbia challenges the centralization of institutional art practices, and art only being valid in urban, institutional spaces.

PS: What themes, ideas, reflections or impacts have emerged from this exhibition?

GR: I was interested in the gentle and subtle way you responded to Ruth Bieber's play. It seemed to me like a really, nurturing and sensitive response and truly a response. Not like, like you really could have just taken her piece and thought, okay, I am going to do an opener, but there was something in what you did that was more caring and I think in a way you, you removed yourself a little bit and that changed things. It seemed intentional. Like you were a physical body and, you made a choice to hide yourself throughout the performance.

PS: Yes, I was responding to her story in visual ways. I played inside the cocoon shape and my body was a silhouette inside the form. I felt this was important because Ruth was telling the audience various stories that were out of sequence. In one story she has this rope tied to the floor and it helped guide her across to the other side as a representation of a mountain face. In that moment, I felt like she was physically present in an imagined space. And since our audience was mostly sighted versus non-sighted, I wanted to give her a backdrop to this quest. There was also this story about this mother going through severe postpartum after giving birth and her not even realizing that her child was being scorched by water on a stove. It manifested in the visual projections in the show. They show continuous motions of her floating up and then down and falling in this water. And so, I felt like, between that imagery, the materials and the sound that formed a kind of cocoon mountain scape.

GR: Yes, that came across. And, it was very gratifying to see how you responded to Ruth's play. Also, you seem always very, very conscious of your viewers from the very beginning in a way that's not always how artists work. I find often, well for me, I need to have that time where I'm not imagining an audience in order for anything to happen in the studio, before I'm picturing how it's going to be responded to or does it feel like we're just watching you in your process, you're thinking about the audience from... It's almost how you, you get to that place of creation that's so rich is through thinking about your audience first.

PS: Yes, when I make a piece for a specific place, it is about the audience first. Whether that is one, twenty, a hundred, there's a consideration for the place that I'm showing the work in and it is always considered.

GR: It's almost like that's where your agenda or parameters for each project come from. Like it's not like you're making it up in your room or in your studio beforehand. It comes from that, the space that you're working in. So, it's almost like being in unconventional spaces or situations might be more generative than just have a white cube. Like you need those constraints for your work to take place.



INTERLUDE

*Memories of
Others Carrying*

When I was seven years old, we lived at 999 Stardust Street in Kamloops. The two-storey house sat on the corner lot and had multiple crab apples, plum and other small fruit trees and a large garden. We had multiple cats, kittens and three Afghan dogs named Woan, Solomon, and Sheaba. The dogs were mostly friendly and sometimes they let me ride on top of them. They would carry me through the yard and around the trees. They mostly stayed in the backyard, unless they jumped the neighbour's fence.

I remember one of the cats named Marble went missing for months, and then unexpectedly returned home on Halloween carrying multiple baby sacs in her tummy.



Figure 102. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #11, 2020.

4.7 *Carrying Others*

Medium

Single-channel A/V installation

Location

Vancouver BC, White Gallery, University of Exeter UK

Materials

Plastic, tape, drone, smartphone, camera, tripod, monitor, stand, computer

Collaborator

Reese Muntean

Link

<https://prophecysun.com/Carrying-Others>



This section discusses *Carrying Others (2019)*, a three-channel A/V work investigating human and non-human, animate and non-animate relationships and relatedness in urban landscapes. The artwork shares part of the title of this dissertation and takes up notions of Carriage, As mentioned in the Introduction of this document, the term, Carriage, is based on Bracha L. Ettinger's notions on carrying being something we all experience and how this knowledge resonates through bodily memories and experiences (Ettinger, 2006; 2016; Vanraes, 2017).⁸⁰ Van Doreen posits how carrying is intrinsically linked to feminine subjectivity and emphasizes a form of knowledge holding or a more-than-material dimension of place (Van Doreen, 2016).

The artwork was co-created and produced with Reese Muntean and was shown in a group exhibition in the Thornlea White Gallery for the Theatre and Performance Research Association Conference (TaPRA 2019) at the University of Exeter, UK. The artwork was curated in the group exhibition by the Performance.Experience. Presence (P.E.P) research project at the University of Plymouth. The theme of the exhibition was Borderlands. The focus was practice as research or Research-Creation approaches on how bodies move and experience subjectivity. The artwork was presented through monitors and the ambient sound composition reverberated throughout the exhibition space. Importantly, this artwork was created from a series of improvised performative experiments in an urban park in Vancouver, B.C.

This artwork takes up all the three theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism, the Optical and the Technological Unconscious, and the subtheme, Bodies and Extraction—the mixing of human and non-human forms and technologies. As mentioned in earlier sections in this chapter, this artwork is also an example feminist collaborative process, or, what Loveless and Wilson describe as Collaborative Feminist Praxis, wherein resources, tasks, filming, movement are equally divided and skills shared to complete the work (Loveless and Wilson, 2020). I discuss these ideas, and how extraction and capture technologies like the drone are used as a method. Specifically, I outline how mobile devices can pull focus away from the human form and instead draw attention to bodies moving in the landscape.

The following pages of this section present this research and related digital ephemera as evidence of Carriage, which includes exhibition and performance documentation, the exhibition call, submission text, process and other documentation, video stills and a reflection.

Previous Page: Figure 103. prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean, Carrying Others, 2019. Video still courtesy of Reese Muntean.

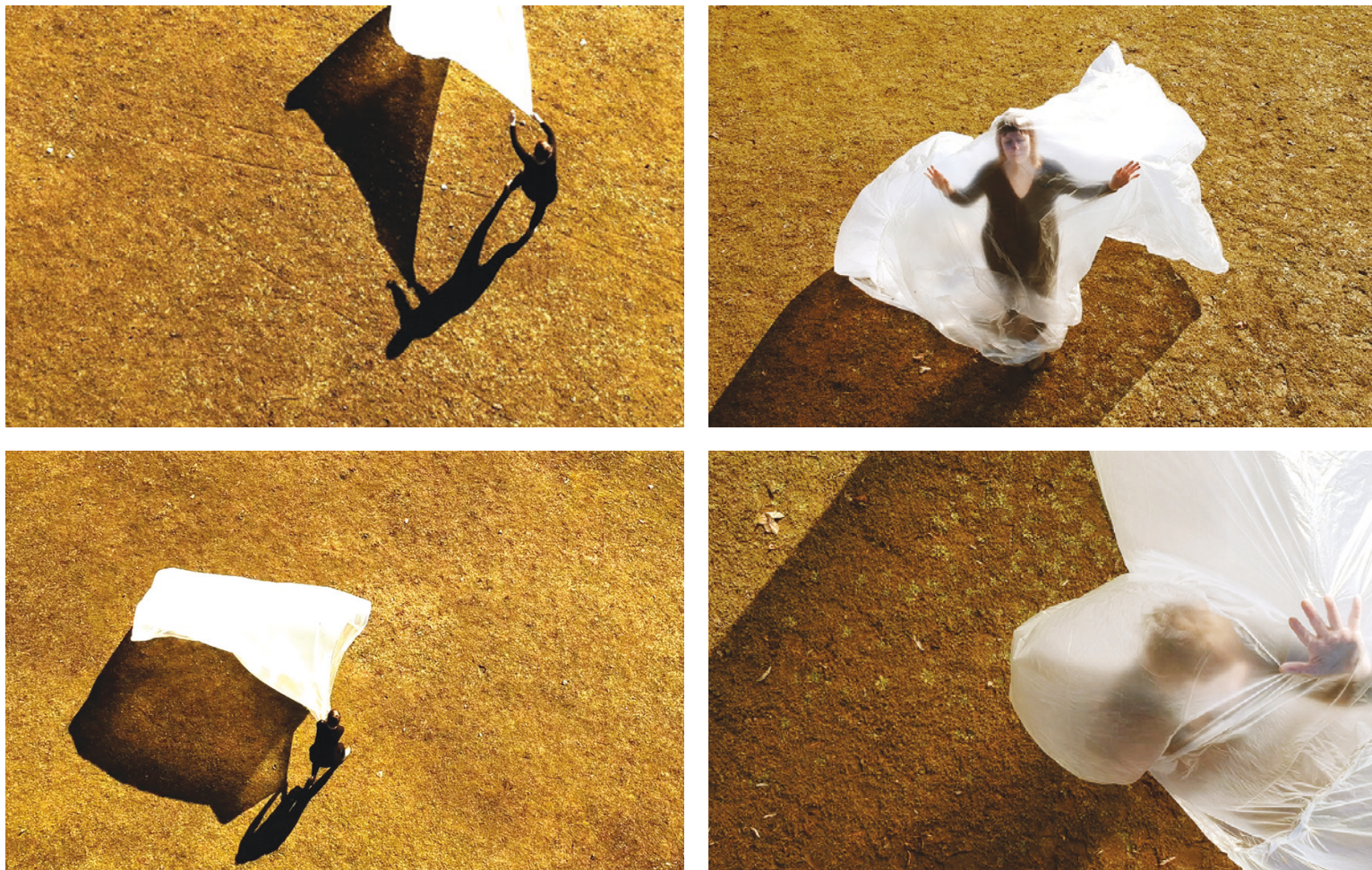


Figure 104. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. Video stills courtesy of Reese Muntean.



Figure 105. *prOphecy sun*, and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. Video stills courtesy of Reese Muntean.

4.7.1 Theatre & Performance Research Association 2019 Conference Exhibition: September 5, 2019



Figure 106. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. Installation mock-up courtesy of Reese Muntean and *prOphecy sun*.



Figure 107. prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean, Carrying Others, 2019. Video still courtesy of Reese Muntean.

4.7.2 Reflection

Over the last century, avant-garde filmmakers and artists have added original, unconventional and personal contributions to the field of cinematography. Jonathan Walley writes that expanded cinematic practices are spatial metaphors, characterized by, “artistic and technological change,” highlighting convergence, interdisciplinarity and remediation (Walley, 2020, 38). In particular, these works feature a spectrum of perspectives and experimental techniques that shed light on a vast array of new hybrid media formats and technologies like drones, cameras, satellites, and smartphones that translate, transform and generate new aesthetic potentialities and landscapes. Inspired by these ideas on convergence and remediation, in particular, on avant-garde sensibilities of unconventional approaches to filmic process, the following pages discuss *Carrying Others* (2019), a three-channel audio, video installation.

Carrying Others (2019) features a series of aerial vignettes using drones that survey and surveil the landscape. The artwork explores identity and form in the urban landscape. This artwork was co-created and produced with Reese Muntean and shown in a group exhibition in the Thornlea White Gallery for the Theatre and Performance Research Association Conference (TaPRA 2019) at the University of Exeter, UK. The artwork was presented alongside a variety of other artworks in traditional and accidental formats throughout the White Building Gallery and Alexander Building.

Much in line with other contemporary experimental filmmakers such as Lisa Birke (2017), Ariel and Zoe Kirk-Gushowaty (2013), Johana Ožvold (2020), Amanda Thomson (2017), and Chelsea McMullan (2018) of the Iris Film Collective, to name but a few, this artwork sits at the periphery of the avant-garde and landscape, technology and installation. I would like to spend a moment discussing Lisa Birke (2017), Zoe Kirk-Gushowaty (2013) and Johana Ožvold’s (2020) cinematic artwork because they exemplify flâneuse sensibilities of liberating and moving through space in new and emergent ways.

In Birke’s piece, *Pictures in an Exhibition* (2013), viewers watch as a female figure relentlessly walks across a red carpet in expansive landscapes. Here, Birke’s explorer investigates power dynamics and societal expectations on where women are allowed to exist. She states that she wears a, “pair of black, three-inch heels,” as a way to, “question our expectations of the tropes and representations of women,” and their relationship to nature, their own images and the ways they are envisioned and presented on the big screen (Birke, 2013). One of the most interesting aspects of Birke’s performance is her continuous journey through the landscape, across less travelled terrain— from one ecosystem, to another.

Zoe Kirk-Gushowaty’s eight-minute experimental piece, *Night Visions* (2013), is both a conversation and a provocation on how a female embodies and perceives the cyclical patterns of the moon through the lens of a landscape that is far in the distance. Rather than depicting a literal female form, Kirk-Gushowaty’s piece opens with a colourful binocular view of six moon segments lined in a row, a visual metaphor for the feminine. Like synaesthesia, a neurological phenomenon that merges all senses, the circular images rhythmically move, glitch, shapeshift or merge into two larger spherical forms that depict the monthly cycle of the moon’s waxing and waning. Kirk-Gushowaty writes that the images are transposed to create a border between the existential and the real and to provide a reflection of our everyday— “between inner hidden worlds and physical environments” (2013). What this piece

reveals are her deep connection to memory, people, patterns, ecosystems and technologies.

Johana Ožvold's full-length piece, *The Sound is Innocent* (2019), opens with an epic scene of a female form walking through a deserted factory floor, an observer as sound ephemera such as TVs, Printers, Keyboards, and Radios proceed on a conveyor belt in a procession line to death. The footage of cascading gadgets, devices and hardware falling down into an abyss is riveting and speaks to the banality of the everyday and the severity of the digital innovation boom. The objects lose meaning in a landscape full of other sameness. Imagination and process take on a new life that propels us forward, but in doing so, disappears the human voice and figure. Ultimately, this work explores the links between society and technology and how posthumans navigate a labyrinth of memories and institutions of place and time.

While other artists such as Amanda Thomson, Chelsea McMullan, Ariel Kirk-Gushowaty and Sophy Romvari take up similar notions on the ecologies of place and work at the periphery of the avant-garde and landscape, technology and installation, all of these examples incorporate hyper-mediated, queer, feminist materialist and decentered perspectives on subjectivity, time and corporeity—exploring identity, narratives of escape and transcendence (Mauzerall 91).

Similar to works like *Hunting Self* (2018) and *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), which were discussed earlier in this chapter, *Carrying Others* (2019) seeks to communicate perspectives of movement, performance and material experiments in the everyday through a feminist approach to filmic process and landscape design that: 1) combines a range of technological apparatus, techniques and experimental perspectives on production including editing software, drone and smartphone technologies; 2) foregrounds a posthuman performativity (Barad, 2007); and 3) contributes to a growing body of feminist media production in the arts and humanities. Referencing Michele De Certeau's ideas on how pathways unsettle existing patterns and habits—mental, physical, and emotional—this work illustrates a spectrum of methods

and potentialities on how pathways become meaningful or transformative as we breathe new life into them. The artwork was shot in a park in Vancouver over a series of days (De Certeau, 1984). The plastic forms were never the same and fabricated and installed on site at every shoot. Much like earlier works in this document, I take up notions of the flâneuse and experimental processes, which include improvisational, iterative and site-specific approaches that required a lot of making-thinking- doing strategies of creation on the spot.

This lens-based work brings the view up close, following a body meandering through an urban park, next to water passages along their journeys elsewhere, investigating movement and unknown perspectives rarely seen or felt. The video triptych invites viewers to consider a new spectrum of consciousness by witnessing a dance among a human form, an ever-changing species, and the unseen collaborator flying above.

The drone is in relation to the body, the land, the inflatable, sending and receiving signals from the ground. The drone is controlled by another body who is situated elsewhere in the landscape; hidden from view, yet present in actions of caring for, receiving and giving care and attention to the drone. In this complicated way, each body (including the drone body) is in relation with each other and moves and mirrors and captures views of this complicated and consciously unconscious dance. In essence, each body holds space for (Corrigan, 2006), cares for, supports and carries vantage points of the other.

Ultimately, this speculative artwork presents an improvisational layered account of discovery, material and form mingling, and reflection—revealing how bodies meld with objects to become other, suggesting how non-human city dwellers may perceive the interactions below, and how new physical geographies and potentialities of flight and levity with vibrant objects can carve space in urban landscapes.

Building on many aspects of this research, the next section presents the final artwork in this chapter, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*

(2019). The project was collaboratively made and shown at the Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, British Columbia from September 6–28th, 2019. Similar to *Carrying Others* (2019), this artwork takes up ecologies of place, flâneuse sensibilities—working at the periphery of the avant-garde and landscape, using drone and smartphone technologies as a creative method to capture memories in the landscape.

4.7.3 Theatre & Performance Research Association 2019 Conference (TaPRA) Call: April 1, 2019

As part of the Theatre & Performance Research Association (TaPRA) Conference 2019, we welcome proposals to exhibit artworks and/or documentation arising from Practice as Research (PAR) projects in and across theatre and performance disciplines.

Selected audiovisual, digital, material or analogue works will be exhibited in a TaPRA Gallery hosted by the University of Exeter, 4th-6th September 2019. The exhibition will be curated by PhD researchers in the Performance.Experience.Presence (P.E.P) research group at the University of Plymouth.

The curation team invites responses to the theme of Borderlands, especially as it might relate to the body and subjectivity in PaR. These responses may address (but are not limited to) that which is:

- *In flight or in motion*
- *Overlapping*
- *Interdisciplinary*
- *Porous*
- *Usurping or usurped*
- *Between human and non-human*
- *Fragile or disintegrating*
- *Subject to or the result of negotiation*
- *Intersubjective or intercorporeal*

You may only submit one proposal in response to this call for participation in this exhibition.

Proposals

Please send the following via email, with the subject line 'TaPRA Gallery Exhibition 2019, by 5pm on 31st May 2019.

1. *300 words (max) describing the work being submitted to be used for selection and for any documentation associate with the exhibition.*
2. *50 words (max) bio and a link to an online profile.*
3. *At least 3 images/stills of work being submitted, including one for use in supporting the exhibition. Please title images with your name and title of work (e.g. 'Paige_RemoteViewing.jpg')*
4. *Dimensions/requirements of work. Please bear in mind that resources (monitors, projectors etc.) at this point cannot be guaranteed.*

5. *If submitting video: an online link to work (Vimeo or similar), including a download link. Submitted videos must be no longer than 10mins.*
6. *A sentence noting whether you would like to 'activate', present, introduce or informally discuss this work as part of a TaPRA Gallery panel during the conference.*
7. *The work will need to be ready to be installed. Technical requirements need to be kept to a minimum. Large installation forms might not be able to be accommodated. We will do our best to accommodate more ambitious proposals/works submitted.*

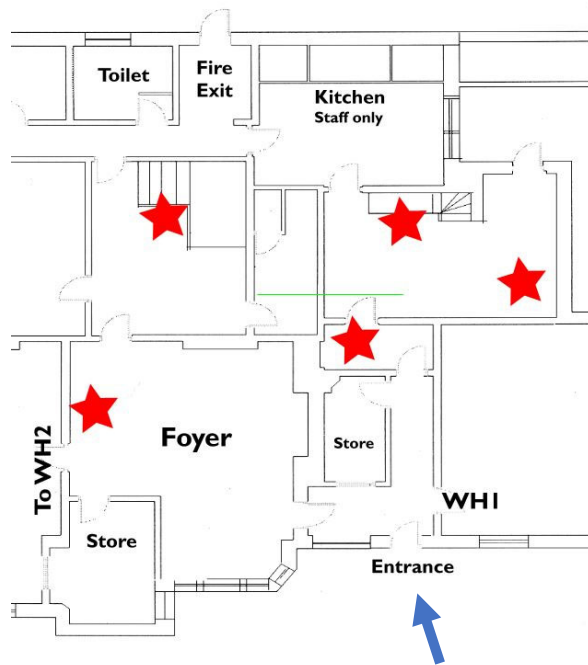
Works must be delivered either in advance with very clear instructions by Tuesday 20th August 2019 or else the artist-researcher will be asked to arrive on Tuesday 3rd September to set up their materials in collaboration with one of the curation team. All works must be collected by 5.30 pm on Friday 6th September.

4.7.4 Theatre & Performance Research Association 2019 Conference Gallery Map

TaPRA 2019 Gallery Map

The gallery can be found at a number of sites around Thornlea. Please return the map after use!

White House:



Alexander Building:

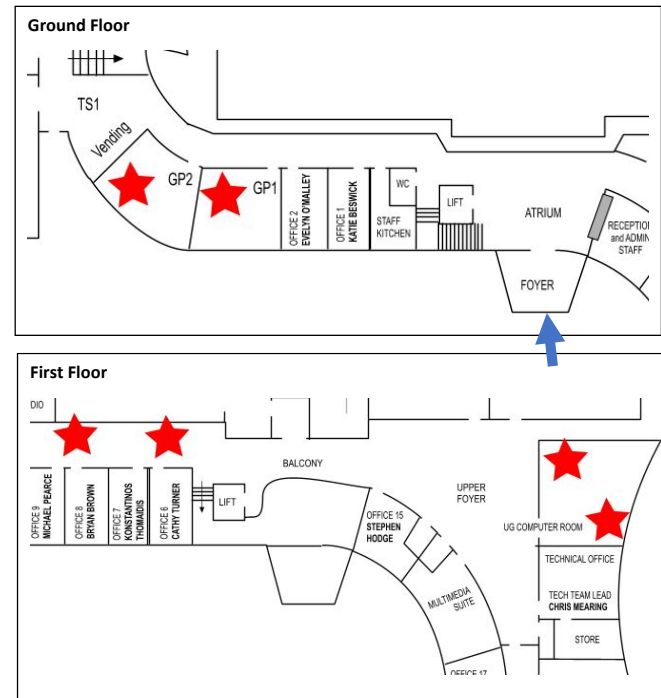


Figure 108. *prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean, Carrying Others, 2019. White House Gallery and Alexander Building floor plan.*

4.7.5 Theatre & Performance Research Association 2019 Conference Submission: May 29, 2019

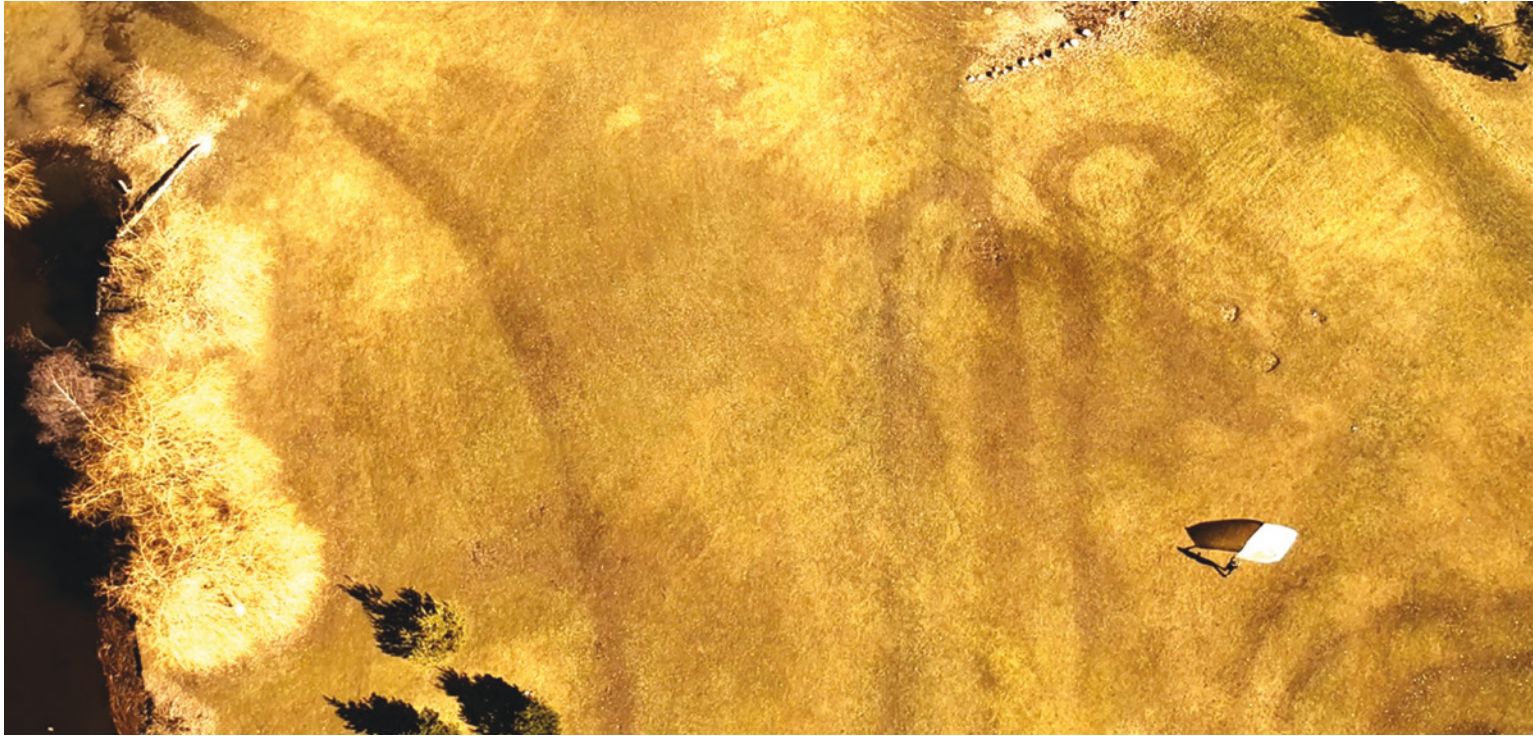


Figure 109. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. Video still courtesy of Reese Muntean.

Conference Submission Statement: May 20, 2019

By prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean

Standard models of Research-Creation usually take the form of a project, documentation, disseminated through presentations and academic literature. This interdisciplinary artwork takes a contemporaneous making-thinking-doing approach that explores and tries to define new potent fields of possibility—where new propositions, materialist sensibilities, and alternative methods of inquiry can co-emerge and validate In-Between, threshold moments of performance. Something akin to what Stacy Alaimo and Susan J. Hekman describe as bodies and the materiality inhabiting and transforming ideology discourses, to include life and lived experience (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). Or, what Jenna Sutela describe as non-linear, creative, parallel spaces meshing devices, materials and time together (Manatakis, Web).

For the TaPRA Gallery exhibition, we proposed *Carrying Others* (2019), a three-channel A/V work featuring a series of aerial vignettes, which illustrate a spectrum of methods and potentialities on how bodies become meaningful (see Fig. 106). Artists prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean created the piece using drones and smartphone technologies. This work brings the view up close, following a body meandering through an urban park, next to water passages along their journeys elsewhere, investigating movement and unknown perspectives rarely seen or felt (see Fig. 107). Ultimately, this speculative artwork presents an improvisational, layered account of discovery, evaluation, and reflection—revealing how bodies meld with objects to become other, and how new physical geographies and potentialities of flight and levity with vibrant objects can carve space in urban landscapes. The moving-images and accompanying sound composition blend body and environmental textures together.

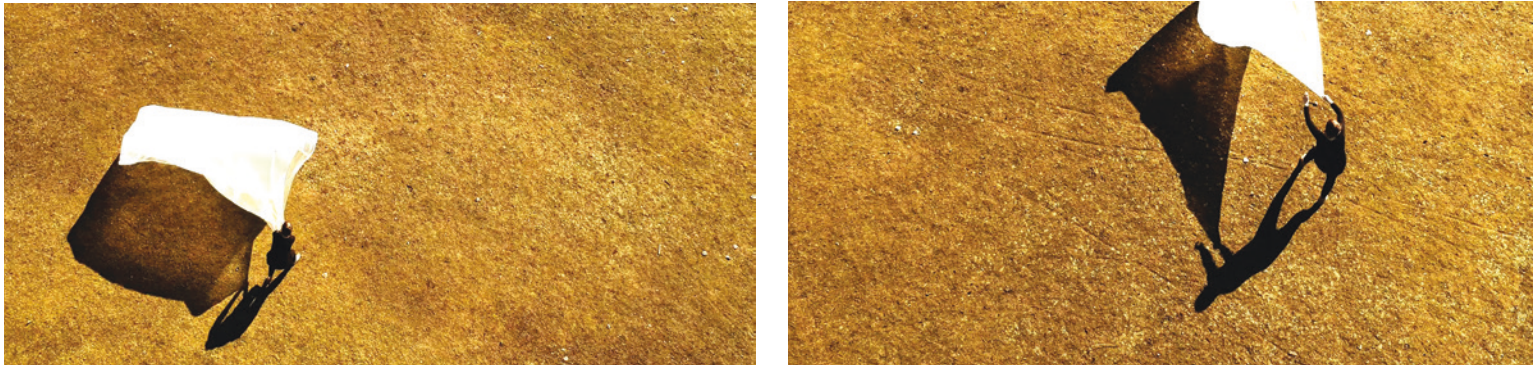


Figure 110. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. Video still.

Technical and Logistical Requirements

- 3 X A/V installation with 3 videos projected onto the wall of the space. Or, through 3 TV screens attached to gallery walls
- The sound is to be amplified through a sound system or through the TV screens

Provided by the artists:

- 3 X videos in both Mp4 and MOV formats
- 1 X soundtrack

Provided by the gallery:

1. Soft room lighting
2. Power outlets
3. 3 X projectors or 3 X TV/Monitor screens with 3 X Media players
4. 1 X sound system and adequate display space for the installation
5. 1 X volunteer/staff to help with the installation of work and turn on and off projections/monitors daily during the exhibition

4.7.6 Project Log: March 12, 2019

4.7.6.1 Video Shoot 1: March 12, 2019



Figure 111. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. In process shots courtesy of Reese Muntean.



Figure 112. *prOphecy sun* and Reese Muntean, *Carrying Others*, 2019. In process shots courtesy of Reese Muntean.

4.7.6.2 Sound Composition: May 20, 2019

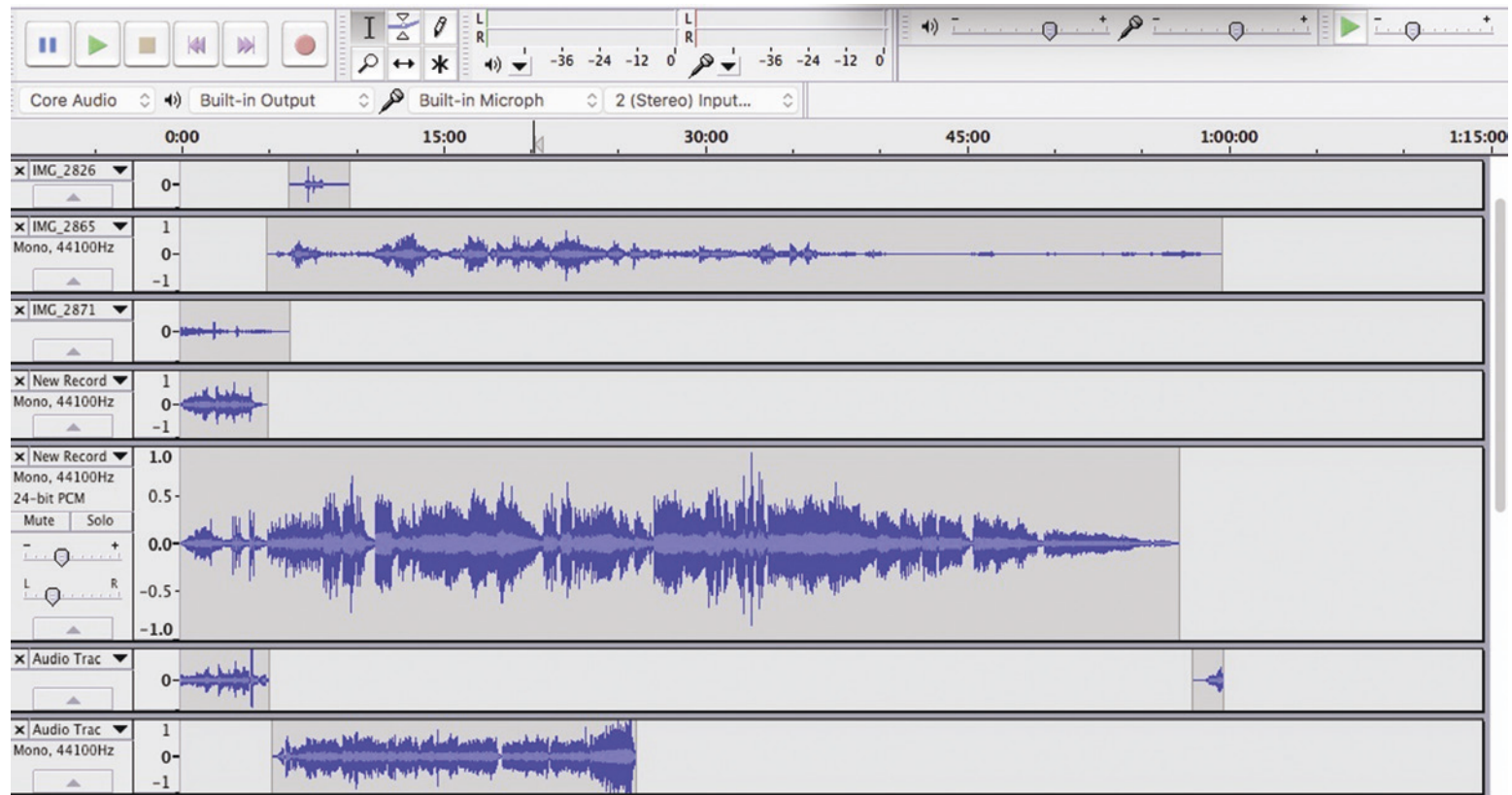


Figure 113. *prOphecy sun, Carrying Others, 2019. In process of making the sound composition.*

4.7.7 Theatre & Performance Research Association 2019 Conference Schedule: September 5, 2019

- Conference Dinner
 Exec Meeting
 Open Panel Sessions
 PG/ECR Events
 Refreshments
 TaPRA Gallery
 Whole Conference Event
 Working Group Sessions

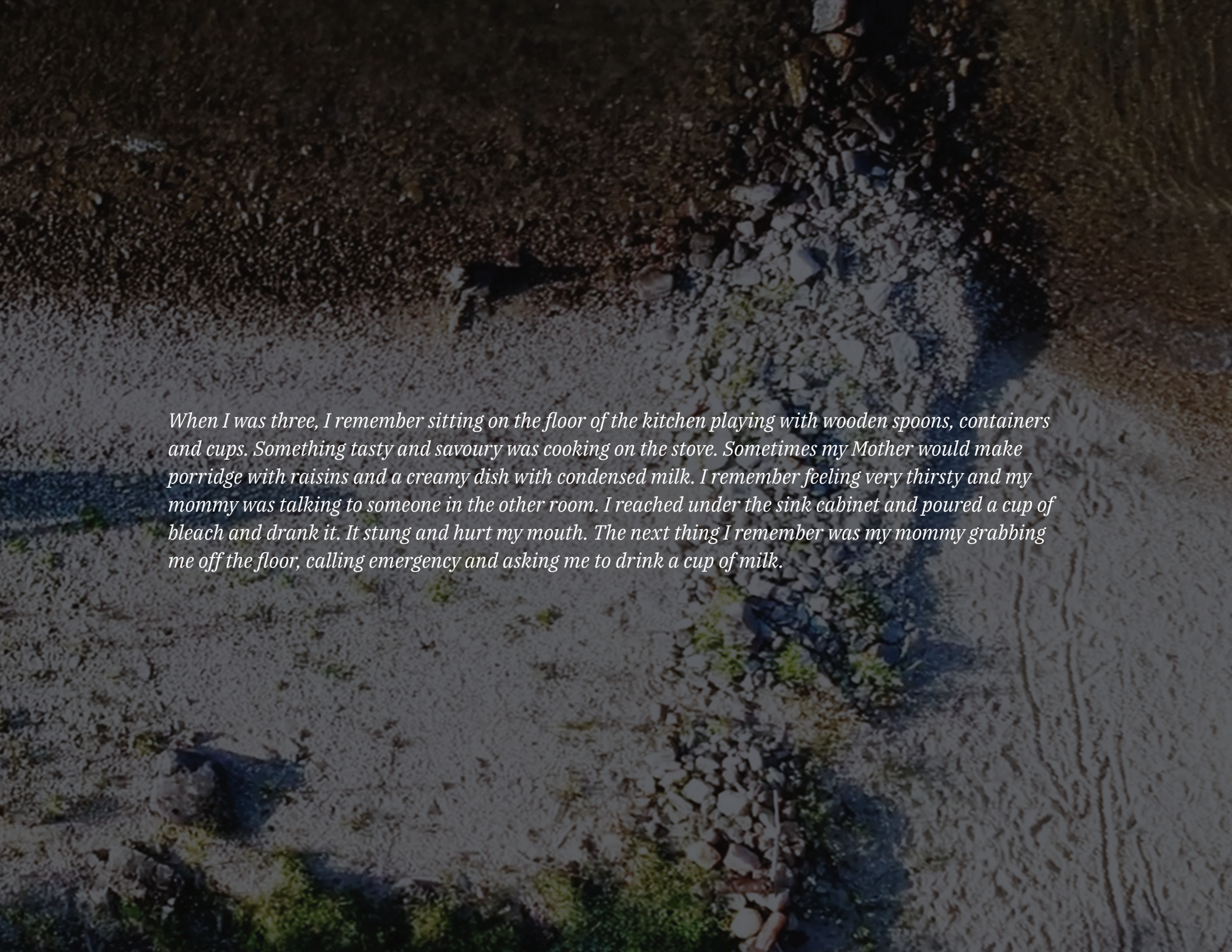
SEPTEMBER 5 • THURSDAY

9:00am – 5:00pm	T	TaPRA Gallery <i>Presenters: karen abadie, Katerina Athanasopoulou, Karen Berger, Charlie Cornforth, Sophia Edlund, Katheryn Owens and Chris Green, Teri and James Harper-Bailie, Janice Howard, Anna Macdonald, Anthea Moys, Prophecy Sun and Reese Muntean, Christina Papagiannouli, Natalie Raven, Playing Dead</i>	Thornlea: Various
9:00am – 5:00pm	W	Registration	Forum: Street

Figure 114. *prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean, Carrying Others, 2019. Opening schedule courtesy of TaPRA website.*

INTERLUDE

*Memories of
Mama's Kitchen*



When I was three, I remember sitting on the floor of the kitchen playing with wooden spoons, containers and cups. Something tasty and savoury was cooking on the stove. Sometimes my Mother would make porridge with raisins and a creamy dish with condensed milk. I remember feeling very thirsty and my mommy was talking to someone in the other room. I reached under the sink cabinet and poured a cup of bleach and drank it. It stung and hurt my mouth. The next thing I remember was my mommy grabbing me off the floor, calling emergency and asking me to drink a cup of milk.



Figure 115. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #12, 2020.

4.8 Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard

Medium

7-channel A/V installation

Locations

Oxygen Art Centre, Sunshine Bay, Nelson BC

Materials

5 found apple trees from a windstorm, assorted apples, spark drone, smartphone, tripod, wooden crate, railroad ties, spikes, 7 short throw projectors, 3 headphones, paper hangings, computer, iPod

Collaborator

Darren Fleet

Curators

Genevieve Robertson, Julia Prudhomme

Photography

Randi Fjeldseth, Thomas Nowaczynski, Brian Lye

Technical Support

Ian Johnston

Link

<https://prophecysun.com/Nostalgic-Geography>



This section introduces *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard (2019)*, a seven-channel immersive installation that was co-created with Darren Fleet. The artwork was shown at the Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, BC from September 6 – 28th, 2019. This exhibition was the creative result of an artist residency at Oxygen Art Centre that took place two weeks leading up to the exhibition.

This artwork is another example of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation demonstrating a range of sensorial and creative approaches to sound composition, installation, creative collaboration, and dissemination. For example, the work was created through an artist residency, shown in an exhibition format, discussed over an artist talk and community dinner, and disseminated as an artist catalogue.

Taking up the three theoretical orientations, which include Feminist Materialism, the Optical Unconscious and the Technological Unconscious, and the subtheme, Nostalgia—a seminal yearning for a past moment or happier memory, this research makes visible the entanglement of bodies, matter and space (Mondloch, 2018). In particular, this research questions how I negotiate materiality, interact with familial sites of memory and how this perception shapes the sensorial, cinematic output using smartphone, photographic and drone apparatus (Benjamin, 2010; Thrift, 2004). The following pages present the artwork and evidence of Carriance through archival digital ephemera, which includes curatorial conversations, exhibition and process documentation and catalogue, the exhibition call, submission text, press material and ends with a reflection.

Previous Page: Figure 116. prOphesy sun and Darren Fleet, Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard, 2019. Video still courtesy of Darren Fleet.

4.8.1 Nostalgic Geography Exhibition Catalogue: November 15, 2019

NOSTALGIC GEOGRAPHY

Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard

PROPHECY SUN & DARREN FLEET

Curators

Genevieve Robertson and Julia Prudhomme

Sponsors

Canada Council for the Arts,
British Columbia Arts Council, Columbia Basin
Trust, Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance,
and Nelson & District Credit Union

Photography

Randi Fjeldseth, Thomas Nowaczynski,
Darren Fleet and prOphecy sun

Videography

Darren Fleet and Brian Lye

Graphic Design

KeikoCreative

Print

Hall Printers. Printed in Canada by
Hall Printers, 2019

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the generous and kind support of the Canada Council for the Arts, Columbia Basin Trust, Oxygen Art Centre, Oxygen's community and volunteers and the excellent folks at Hall Printing. We would like to thank the Sun family, Greg & Terry, Ian Johnston, Genevieve Robertson, Julia Prudhomme, Andy P. Dobson, Randi Fjeldseth, Thomas Nowaczynski, Brian Lye, Jim Holyoak, Mirae Rosner, Jesse Scott, Keiko Lee-Hem, Vallalee Hoffman, and all the great people of Sunshine Bay, Harrop-Procter, the City of Nelson and beyond.

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The Exhibition

OXYGEN ART CENTRE

Based in Nelson BC, Oxygen Art Centre is a rural artist-run centre that provides space and programming for artists and the public to engage in the creation, study, exhibition and performance of contemporary art in all disciplines. Oxygen Art Centre is particularly interested in work with regional relevance, interdisciplinary work and work that engages audiences in participatory processes. Oxygen's Exhibition and Residency Program supports process-based projects that encourage experimentation and push conventional practice. Founded in 2002, Oxygen is an integral and long-standing cultural hub for artists of all disciplines and professional levels in the West Kootenays and beyond.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

prOphesy sun is an interdisciplinary performance artist, feminist, movement, video and sound maker, mother and PhD Candidate at the School of Interactive Arts + Technology at Simon Fraser University. She holds a BFA and MFA from Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Her practice celebrates both conscious and unconscious moments, and the vulnerable spaces of the in-between in which art and life overlap. She performs and exhibits regularly in local, national and international settings, festivals, conferences and galleries. She is also the recipient of the Governor Generals Gold Award, the Lakehead Jurors Prize, the Hellen Pitt and the Joseph Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship and has authored several peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and journal publications.

Darren Fleet is an ex-poet from Aldergrove, deeply entrenched in Fuckovian theories of aesthetics. He is also a writer, journalist, photographer and PhD candidate and instructor at the SFU School of Communication. His interests include consumer culture, environmental discourse and the cultural politics of fossil fuels. He holds an MA in Journalism from UBC and was part of the editorial team at Adbusters magazine that launched the #occupywall-street meme into the world. His work has been featured in numerous publications and forums including: Vice, Public, Journalists for Human Rights, UTNE Reader, Al-Jazeera, The National Observer, The Tyee, The Globe & Mail, and at the Istanbul Biennial of Art.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Extracting Memory from the Landscape Through Embodied Process and Drone Technology

Harrop-Procter, an area of 650-1150 residents depending on the season, sits at the mouth of the west arm of Kootenay Lake in south eastern British Columbia. It is remote. Accessed by ferry only, it is a place of long winters, deep lakes and high mountains. Before a series of hydro-electric dams were built downstream, Harrop-Procter would flood to high levels each spring establishing seasonal gathering rounds for Sinixt communities, who would have accessed it from their year-round villages close by (Pearkes). While the Sinixt have experienced systematic cultural genocide and expropriation, they maintain a relationship to the area that is over 10,000 years long.

The colonial townsite history of Harrop-Procter is one of settlement in the late nineteenth century for mining and logging, followed by the construction of a Canadian Pacific Railway spur in 1900. The area was then serviced by sternwheelers, which brought supplies in and took harvested resources out. Although no longer agriculturally productive, the region is studded with rambling orchards; gnarled apple trees stand sometimes still heavy with fruit. For over 20 years, artist prOphecy sun's family have been renting a property on an aging orchard in Sunshine Bay, a hamlet between Harrop and Procter.

In their exhibition, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in Their Backyard* prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet collaboratively negotiate the terrain of this place, and both the personal and political narratives it holds.

One walks into the naturally lit space to find railway beams placed strategically at the entrance-way to the gallery, requiring the viewer to walk between or around them. At the end of the row of beams is a vignette of prOphecy walking away from the viewer along a railroad line, shot with a drone. Projected throughout the space at an intimate scale and low to the ground, the viewer absorbs multiple vignettes simultaneously. The videos picture prOphecy's figure captured from far above as she winds her way through the visually rhythmic orchards and moves steadily along worn paths that are made tidy from such a lofty height. Found remnants of agriculture and rail transport collected on prOphecy's family land are installed throughout the exhibition at ground level. In the centre of the gallery, five fruit trees are suspended like specters of a different place and time. They transform from vibrant to wilted throughout the exhibition's duration, producing a subtle smell of decaying apples.

Layered, ambient sound creates an eerie quality evocative of squealing metal under hot railroad tracks, produced with minor-key vocalizations and the lonely field recordings of birds, wind and weather. A discreet sound piece experienced through headphones includes archival footage of prOphecy's father, brother and daughter. The effect of the audio-visual works is haunting and meditative, evoking absence through tone while never explicitly naming familial loss.

Responding to prOphecy's father's sudden passing two-and-a-half years ago, the exhibition is in part an elegiac effort to interact with the site that carries his memories (sun). Through embodied process prOphecy honours his passing by tracing his daily steps through the land. One noticeably different vignette pictures sun purposefully dragging large driftwood pieces to the edge of the lake. Over the course of her repetitive gestures she is building a Sisyphian raft, a structure that will

never keep water out, or her body in. A sense of loss is replaced by frustration as she struggles to navigate her father's absence and to deal with the fragmentary nature of her memories. By recreating place-based memory using multiple projections, embodied process, and layered sound the artists question its inherent completeness and assert its mutability.

Familial nostalgia is embedded in the land itself for the artists. Yet ideas of *nostalgia* – particularly in the context of landscape representation – risk romanticizing pre-industrialized and settler-pioneered places. Further, the discipline of *geography* is deeply implicated in histories of cartographic representation that have opened up land to imperial occupation and resource extraction. How might settler artists contend with telling a personal story that is deeply imbedded in the west Kootenay landscape, without reproducing colonial nostalgia towards place, agriculture and nature? sun and Fleet respond to this question through their use of text and drone technology.

The exhibition forefronts the terms *nostalgic* and *geography* while staying in dialogue with their implicit tensions. Two didactic wall texts activate this dialogue. One is narrative, combining ten years of family stories into a text about harvesting potatoes. Beside it sits a long list of 43 possible adjectives to describe geography, from *nostalgic* to *petrol*, to *colonial* to *incomplete*. While the narrative text is nostalgic, the list self-reflexively acknowledges geography as a loaded term. The polarity in tone between the two texts makes explicit the tension between personal and political that exists in the exhibition's content and title.

Through their use of drone technology, sun and Fleet experiment with ideas of *extracting* memory, while appropriating its military and industrial uses. Drone photography is a surveillance technology used in weaponry and resource sectors for violent ends. The uneasiness of surveillance footage is

heavily referenced through the use of the god's eye perspective that tracks prOphecy's movement through the landscape. While personal stories are extracted rather than natural resources, the artists question their own nostalgia through the active reconstruction of memory from this 'objective' yet dreamlike vantage point.

For the artists, this project has been a negotiation between conflicting responsibilities. While required to 'deliver' an exhibition, their more urgent responsibility was to the sun family. Telling a personal narrative while not exposing a family's privacy became a delicate balance where issues of authorship, precarity and power through cultural mobility were entangled in relational networks.

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in Their Backyard is deftly multivalent. While remaining in dialogue with its own tensions and negotiations, it also records an embodied grieving process that looks to the land and its living and non-living materials for direction. It is a meditation on both presence and absence of memory imbedded in landscape, and retrieved through the invocation of sound, text, material and moving image. "**The sound of the night train marks our time together that is suddenly here and suddenly gone**" Darren Fleet, *Exhibition Wall Text*, *Nostalgic Geography*, 2019

WORKS CITED

- Parkes, Eileen Delehanty. "Re: Sinixt Name or Names for Harrop Procter Area". Message to Genevieve Robertson. 9 October 2019. Email.
- sun, prOphecy. Artist Interview. 20 September 2019.

THE RESIDENCY AND MAKING



Figure 1-2. Drone training and shoot at the farm, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet.



Figure 3-4. Shoot at the farm, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet.



Figure 5-7. Shoot on the railroad, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet.



Figure 8-10. Shoot on the railroad, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet.



Figure 11-12. Shoot at the orchard, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet.



Figure 13-14. Lake shot and sound mixing, 2019. Photo: Darren Fleet and prOphecy sun.



Figure 15-17. Tree travel, 2019. Photo: prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet.



Figure 18-20. Installation, 2019. Photo: prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet.



Figure 21-22. Final shoot and tree installation, 2019. Photo: prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet.

THE EXHIBITION



Figure 23. *Exhibition View*, 2019. Photo: Thomas Nowaczynski.



Figure 24-25. Exhibition View, 2019. Photo: Thomas Nowaczynski.



Figure 26-27. Exhibition View, 2019. Photo: Thomas Nowaczynski.



Figure 28-29. Exhibition View, 2019. Photo: Randi Fjeldseth.

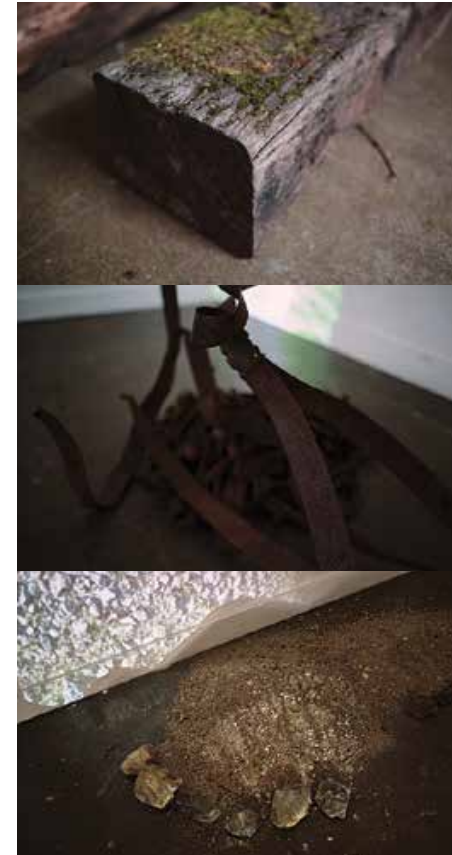


Figure 30-31. Exhibition View, 2019. Photo: Thomas Nowaczynski.



Figure 32-34. *Installation Views and Text*, 2019. Photo: prOphecy sun.



Figure 35-36. Video Stills from Projection #1 and #2.

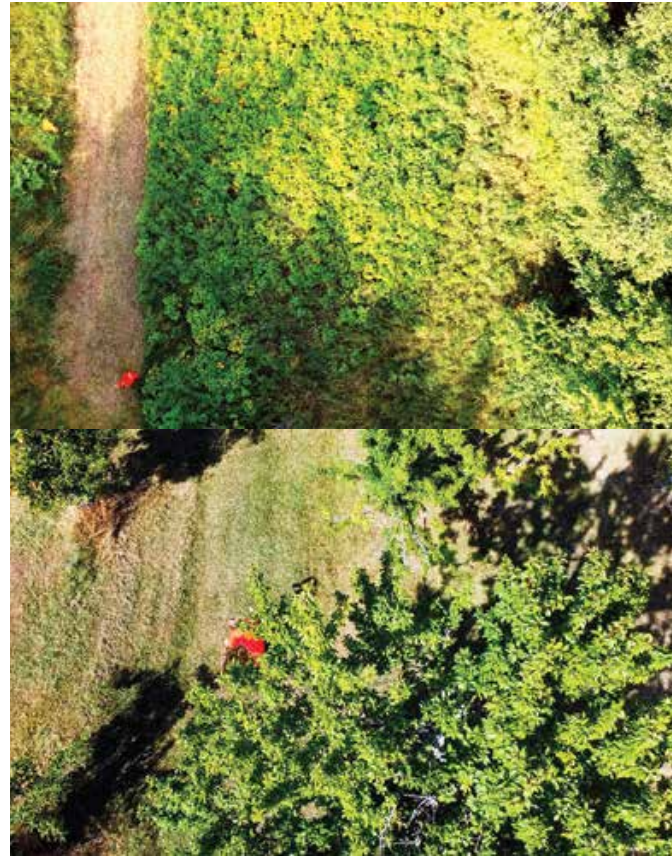


Figure 37-38. Video Stills from Projection #3.



Figure 39-40. Video Stills from Projection #4.



Figure 40-42. Video Stills from Projection #5.



Figure 43. Video Still from Projection #6.

Stories

There is a very small hill off of the back door that opens up to the steep and steady incline toward the greenhouses and the bathtubs. I take a slight turn and then straight up through the plum and pear trees. On the ground there are some broken branches from some playful and hungry bear the night before. I see boulders and freshly cut grass. I feel the hot heat. I remember that time we all sat up there digging rocks out of the soil. Rock after rock after rock. A never-ending flow of pebbles. We pulled potatoes one-by-one from a 10-pound white bag and placed them into the ground. The radio was pumping. We weaved in and out of conversations about jazz, and politics and the changing weather, spurred on by a sudden dip in temperature as a mass of cool air cascaded down the mountainside and a plane flew high above in the open sky. A child's first steps with her papa. Getting spoon-fed nannie's homemade soup. Eating corn. Watching favourite shows. Learning the essence of one another in this ever-unfolding expansion of new relations. Outside, the stream rushes on its way down the slope and into the arm of the lake, singing its rolling song. **The sound of the night train marks our time together that is suddenly here and then suddenly gone.**

Figure 44. Exhibition text #1.

Tensions

Personal geography	Living geography	Nostalgic geography	Emotional geography
Structural geography	Historical geography	Charismatic geography	Happy geography
Imagined geography	Enigmatic geography	Buried geography	Moving geography
Family geography	Continental geography	Hidden geography	Painful geography
Future geography	Metamorphic geography	Silent geography	Contested geography
Intimate geography	Aquatic geography	Lost geography	Spiritual geography
Acoustic geography	Animal geography	Tragic geography	Colonial geography
Scientific geography	Human geography	Difficult geography	Incomplete geography.
Political geography	Financial geography	Misunderstood geography	
Cultural geography	Resource geography	Beautiful geography	
Impulsive geography	Petrol geography	Confused geography	

Figure 45. Exhibition text #2.



Figure 46. Family Portrait at the Opening Reception, 2019.



Figure 117. prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, Exhibition Catalogue, 2019.

4.8.2 Reflection

And now back to writing, to finding patterns in life and re-creating them in words. Memories know that they must 'look' back over life to find patterns that give order. We use visual and spatial terms to easily look back. But this is true for anyone writing any kind of narrative. Yes, there's the word-after-word motion through a story's tunnels, but ultimately that motion takes on a larger shape: the figure in the carpet, footsteps in the sand. And how curious that a single shape has governed our stories for years (Alison, 2019, 8).

The above quote is taken from Jane Alison's book *Meander, Spiral and Explode*, in which she describes the pleasure of words, and how stories can have arcs, waves, explosions, meanders, spirals or other radical spaces and structures (Alison, 2019). I like this idea and how reading and writing are temporal forms that allow us to see or hear beyond the shape and structure of the form (Alison, 2019). I mention this because this implies that like the power of music and images to electrify and help us to see more than what is in front of us, textural language brings us more vantage points to consider memories, reality and consciousness. Argued another way, memories are constructed of sensorial patterns that tell stories of our relationships to objects, place, or site-specific encounters. Alison describes this as, "word-after-word" encounters with others (Alison, 2019, 8). I consider these ideas alongside *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019), a seven-channel installation that responds to the recent passing of my daddy, Cherub. The artwork was co-created with Darren Fleet and shown at the Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, British Columbia from September 6 – 28th 2019. The piece was created through an artist residency, shown in an exhibition format, discussed over an

artist talk and community dinner, and disseminated as an artist catalogue.

I cannot help but think about how even if the efficacy of a site-specific location is problematic, sentimental, or brings up ethical or unknown complications, the process of artmaking, researching, and finding an outcome becomes a meaningful, creatively driven feminist act. In this way, the piece is another example of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation that demonstrates a range of sensorial and creative approaches to sound composition, installation, creative collaboration, and experimentation. Indeed, the making of this artwork was deeply personal and challenged how I collaborate, view, shoot, and navigate familial relationships.

Rebecca Solnit writes about this narrative familial position as the delicate linking of place and geography and how the gravity of words can change how we view and/or transcend aspects of reality. Solnit states:

To love someone is to put yourself in their place, we say, which is to put oneself in their story, or figure out how to tell yourself their story. Which means that a place is a story, and stories are geography, and empathy is first of all an act of imagination, a storyteller's art, and then a way of traveling from here to there (Solnit, 2013, 1-2).

Here, Solnit points out that stories are a form of geography. I take much inspiration from Solnit and Alison's narrative and abstract approaches to word collaging and ways to present stories. I see potential in thinking through various forms, paying attention to stray thoughts and impulses, queering, connecting and blending the everyday. What delights me about these ideas is the potentiality of words, images and structural impulses and creative forms to evolve into other encounters with no clear beginning, middle and end. ^{81 82}

Like many who have explored the deep ecologies of place such as Lisa Birke, Trudi Lynn Smith, Rita Wong, A. L. Steiner, Mariko Mori, and Zoe Leonard, to name a few, this artwork looks to the

land and its living and non-living materials for direction (Birke, 2016; Wong, 2017; Steiner, 2016; Mori, 2011; Leonard, 2014). Here the focus is on notions of geography, nostalgia, memories, and artistic process to demonstrate how the making of something changes everything. In this sense, the piece is a meditation on both the presence and the absence of memory embedded in the landscape, and how it is retrieved through the invocation of sound, text, material and moving image using extraction technologies such as drones and smartphones (see Fig. 116, 117, and 119).

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard (2019) features an array of digital, material, sonic, corporeal and immersive provocations and embodied ways of situating personal narrative, grief and the process of loss. For example, six apple trees are suspended in an oblong circle formation around the gallery.⁸³ Found railway ties line the entrance in strategic formulation alongside other remnants of the family farm, including nails and other debris from the rail line. These items are placed at ground level throughout the space (each of the items listed above was collected from the family farm over the shoots). Two didactic texts line one wall of the gallery—folding together ten years of family stories about picking rocks from the garden and describes 43 types of ways to understand the terms nostalgia and geography. These details lay out how the immersive installation (materials, trees, rocks, railway ties, moving images of landscape etc.) create textural visual languages that offer the viewer unique vantage points to consider memories, reality and experience.

Alluding to what Doreen Massey describes as a time-space compression that stretches communication and movement across geographical space, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) uses extraction technologies such as a DJI Spark drone, iPhone cameras, tripods, and the DJI GO 4 apps as a means to compress, situate and blend time and memories into one moment.

Similar to earlier works shown in this document, this piece takes up photographic approaches of extraction and Feminist

Materialist strategies to materiality, photography and film. For example, the piece positions seven projectors throughout the exhibition space. Each sit on the floor, in a conversation with each other. The projections display various vignettes, a mix of aerial and ground view perspectives of my form clothed in red walking through old orchards, alongside railroad tracks, beside water passages and mountain terrain.⁸⁴ Each projection has its own unique soundtrack and is a blend of voice, and other site-specific field recordings. What is significant about each of these locations is that they are all places my father walked or discussed frequently before his passing. Through the act of inserting myself in each of these landscapes, I wanted to encounter things he may have seen, felt or heard in these site-specific topographies. I also desired to be part of his rituals and enact walks so I could feel his presence and understand how he moved through the world. This circles back to Alison's ideas on words, images or narrative actions being like arcs, waves, explosions, meanders, spirals or other radical events that can shape our understanding of stories (Alison, 2019, 8).

In this way, the installation conceptualizes time and memories as stretching in all directions, with past, present and future melding all of the encounters into one geographical location. For example, projection five features the sound and moving image of Owl laughing while she runs through the tall orchard grass on the property. Projection one and two amplify the sound and moving images of metal scraping from my hands onto the railroad track ties. Projection six captures the sound and images of waves washing ashore on the side of a sandy beach as I build a log raft that will never float.

The main soundtrack features archival sounds of my family in the kitchen with piano and voice alongside field recordings of the night train. The soundscape weaves and carries the past and present voices together into a shared temporal space. Together, the room sound is an ambient collage that fills the space in waves that reverberate and convey aspects of the visuals and blends with the other assorted ephemera and aged fruit trees lining the space.

Collectively, the sonic compositions embody Carriance through a blended array of anthropophagic, geophonic, and biophonic sounds such as breathing, voice, wind, walking, air, metal scratching, piano playing, wind chimes, moving water, and trains horns. Each track was systematically created by isolating and editing the sounds in ways that feature granulated lengths, tempo and tones. The compositions were then amplified throughout the gallery through the projector speakers and through headphones, which were hung beside the largest, gnarled and decaying apple tree. The finished sound composition carries the sounds from these different locations and experiences and depicts the multiple ghost-like personal narratives as a way of understanding grief and loss and is also a celebration of life and ritual.

The next chapter cumulatively discusses the eight interdisciplinary Research-Creation works that were individually and collaboratively created and produced between 2016–2019: *Traces of Motherhood*; *Domestic Cupboards*; *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between*; *Hunting Self*; *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface*; *Floating in the In-Between*; *Carrying Others*; and *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*. Collectively, these projects allow us to further investigate the complexities of Carriance, process and nuances of the development of a Feminist Materialist approach to Research-Creation practice.

4.8.3 Oxygen Art Centre Curatorial Exhibition Statement: September 7, 2019

Extracting Memory from the Landscape Through Embodied Process and Drone Technology

By Genevieve Robertson

Harrop-Procter, an area of 650-1,150 residents depending on the season, sits at the mouth of the west arm of Kootenay Lake in south eastern British Columbia. It is remote. Accessed by ferry only, it is a place of long winters, deep lakes and high mountains. Before a series of hydro-electric dams were built downstream, Harrop-Procter would flood to high levels each spring establishing seasonal gathering rounds for Sinixt communities, who would have accessed it from their year-round villages close by (Pearkes). While the Sinixt have experienced systematic cultural genocide and expropriation, they maintain a relationship to the area that is over 10,000 years long.

The colonial townsite history of Harrop-Procter is one of settlement in the late nineteenth century for mining and logging, followed by the construction of a Canadian Pacific Railway spur in 1900. The area was then serviced by sternwheelers, which brought supplies in and took harvested resources out. Although no longer agriculturally productive, the region is studded with rambling orchards; gnarled apple trees stand sometimes still heavy with fruit. For over 20 years, artist prOphecy sun's family have been renting a property on an aging orchard in Sunshine Bay, a hamlet between Harrop and Procter.

In their exhibition, Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in Their Backyard, prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet collaboratively negotiate the terrain of this place, and both the personal and political narratives it holds.

One walks into the naturally lit space to find railway beams placed strategically at the entranceway to the gallery, requiring the viewer to walk between or around them. At the end of the row of beams is a vignette of prOphecy walking away from the viewer along a railroad line, shot with a drone. Projected throughout the space at an intimate scale and low to the ground, the viewer absorbs multiple vignettes simultaneously. The videos picture prOphecy's figure captured from far above as she winds her way through the visually rhythmic orchards and moves steadily along worn paths that are made tidy from such a lofty height. Found remnants of agriculture and rail transport collected on prOphecy's family land are installed throughout the exhibition at ground level. In the centre of the gallery, five fruit trees are suspended like specters of a different place and time. They transform from vibrant to wilted throughout the exhibition's duration, producing a subtle smell of decaying apples.

Layered, ambient sound creates an eerie quality evocative of squealing metal under hot railroad tracks, produced with minor-key vocalizations and the lonely field recordings of birds, wind and weather. A discreet sound piece experienced through headphones includes archival footage of prOphecy's father, brother and daughter. The effect of the audio-visual works is haunting and meditative, evoking absence through tone while never explicitly naming familial loss.

Responding to prOphecy's father's sudden passing two and a half years ago, the exhibition is in part an elegiac effort to interact with the site that carries his memories (sun). Through embodied process, prOphecy honours his passing by tracing his daily steps through the land. One noticeably different vignette pictures sun purposefully dragging large driftwood pieces to the edge of the lake. Over the course of her repetitive gestures she is building a Sisyphian raft, a structure that will never keep water out, or her body in. A sense of loss is

replaced by frustration as she struggles to navigate her father's absence and to deal with the fragmentary nature of her memories. By recreating place-based memory using multiple projections, embodied process, and layered sound, the artists question its inherent completeness and assert its mutability.

Familial nostalgia is embedded in the land itself for the artists. Yet ideas of nostalgia--particularly in the context of landscape representation--risk romanticizing pre-industrialized and settler-pioneered places. Further, the discipline of geography is deeply implicated in histories of cartographic representation that have opened up land to imperial occupation and resource extraction. How might settler artists contend with telling a personal story that is deeply imbedded in the west Kootenay landscape, without reproducing colonial nostalgia towards place, agriculture and nature? sun and Fleet respond to this question through their use of text and drone technology.

The exhibition forefronts the terms nostalgic and geography while staying in dialogue with their implicit tensions. Two didactic wall texts activate this dialogue. One is narrative, combining ten years of family stories into a text about harvesting potatoes. Beside it sits a long list of 43 possible adjectives to describe geography, from nostalgic to petrol, to colonial to incomplete. While the narrative text is nostalgic, the list self-reflexively acknowledges geography as a loaded term. The polarity in tone between the two texts makes explicit the tension between personal and political that exists in the exhibition's content and title.

Through their use of drone technology, sun and Fleet experiment with ideas of extracting memory, while appropriating its military and industrial uses. Drone photography is a surveillance technology used in weaponry and resource sectors for violent ends. The uneasiness of surveillance footage is heavily referenced through the use of the god's eye perspective that tracks prophecy's movement through the landscape. While personal stories are extracted rather than natural resources, the artists question their own nostalgia through the active reconstruction of memory from this "objective" yet dreamlike vantage point.

For the artists, this project has been a negotiation between conflicting responsibilities. While required to "deliver" an exhibition, their more urgent responsibility was to the sun family. Telling a personal narrative while not exposing a family's privacy became a delicate balance where issues of authorship, precarity and power through cultural mobility were entangled in relational networks.

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa Have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in Their Backyard is deftly multivalent. While remaining in dialogue with its own tensions and negotiations, it also records an embodied grieving process that looks to the land and its living and non-living materials for direction. It is a meditation on both presence and absence of memory imbedded in landscape, and retrieved through the invocation of sound, text, material and moving image. "The sound of the night train marks our time together that is suddenly here and suddenly gone" (Fleet, Exhibition Wall Text, *Nostalgic Geography*, 2019).

4.8.4 Oxygen Art Centre Exhibition Call: April 28, 2018

Call for Exhibition and Residency Submissions Announced!

Oxygen Art Centre is currently accepting submissions for its Exhibition and Residency program. Regional, national and international professional artists from any discipline are welcome to submit proposals for a solo or group exhibition and/or residency. Oxygen Art Centre is particularly interested in work with regional relevance, cross-disciplinary work and work that engages audiences in participatory processes. Professional (CARFAC) exhibition and artist presentation fees are paid for selected programming. Residencies and exhibitions are typically planned two to three years in advance. Please submit all of the following documents as specified in the Submission Guidelines on our website, and below.

Oxygen Art Centre is an artist-run multidisciplinary centre in Nelson, British Columbia that provides space and programming for artists and the public to engage in the creation, study, exhibition and performance of contemporary art. The goals of Oxygen Art Centre are to stimulate the creation, exhibition and discussion of contemporary art in all disciplines, to stimulate rural cultural development and professional practices in rural artists, to engage in community development through art-based projects and to achieve diversity in all programming.

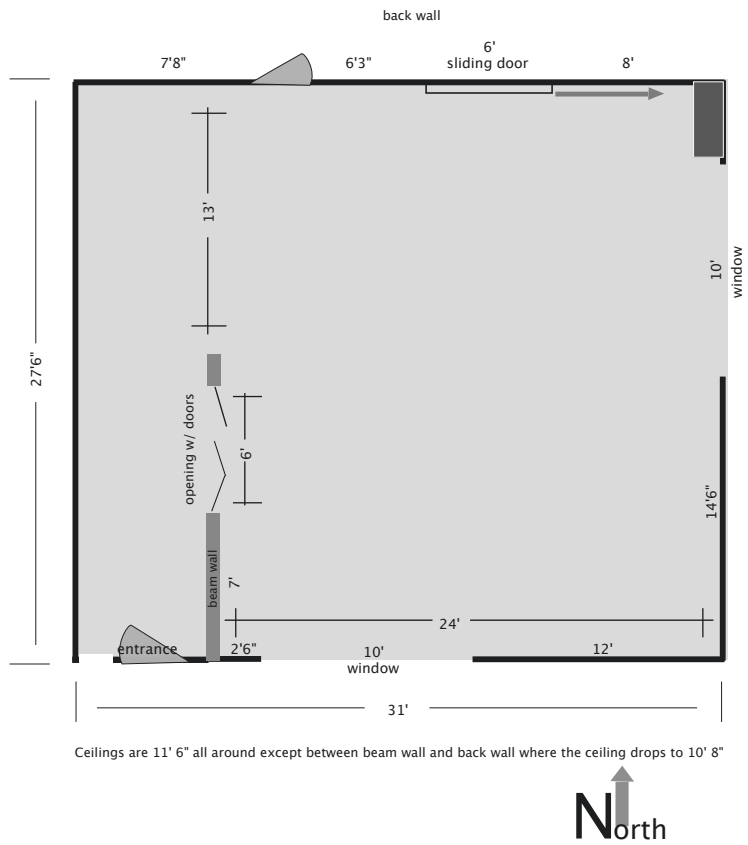
Submission Guidelines

- Indicate if you are applying for an Exhibition or a Residency or both.
- Curriculum Vitae (maximum three pages)
- Proposal describing the program of work intended for the exhibition or residency. Include a brief artist statement that contextualizes your work (maximum one page)
- Artist Bio (maximum 1 paragraph)
- 10 to 15 images a maximum of 1 MB file size each (jpeg format with a resolution of 72 dpi at 1024 x 768 pixels) of the work intended for exhibition or related/recent work for a residency proposal. Images must be labeled with a number/name (01_Smith)
- Image list with image numbers, artist name, title of work, date, medium and dimensions.
- For new media or performance projects submit direct links or DVD related to your proposal in .avi, .mov, .mpg, .mpeg format. Do not send video files electronically.

Deadline: April 30 2018, 5pm

Group exhibition proposals include the cv, bio and artist's statement for each participating artist. Oxygen Art Centre is committed to paying CARFAC fees for exhibitions and artist talks. Pending funding, funds are available for transportation of artwork and artists to and from Nelson. Visiting artists will be billeted with local artists in the community. All accepted proposals are contingent on funding.

4.8.5 Oxygen Art Centre Floor Plan



oxygen floor plan

Figure 118. Oxygen Art Centre Floor Plan, 2019. Courtesy of website.

4.8.6 Oxygen Art Centre Exhibition Submission: April 30, 2018



Figure 119. *prOphecy sun* and Darren Fleet, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, 2019. In process. Photo courtesy of Trinity Sun.

1. *Nostalgic Geography*, 2018. A six-week artist residency.

The residency will include a series of moving image recordings and making in situ titled *Nostalgic Geography*; a sound workshop titled *Acoustic Geography*; and concludes with a community story-sharing supper and exhibition.

The production of the artwork is broken down into three stages. In the first stage we will capture a series of audio and video pieces in situ throughout various local landscapes. This stage will take approximately 2 weeks. This time will be dedicated to scouting and shooting at various locations around Harrop-Procter. The second stage will take approximately 3 weeks. This time will be dedicated to video editing and then installing various projections in situ in the gallery. The third stage will be dedicated to facilitating a hands-on workshop and supper. The proposed residency is 6 weeks in total.

2. *Acoustic Geography*, 2018. A six-hour workshop.

Acoustic Geography is a hands-on workshop led by prOphecy sun. The workshop will engage the Oxygen Art Centre community by providing participants with an opportunity to share, learn and experience art, culture and stories; through a series of recording exercises that will encourage participants to experiment with sounds. Techniques and skills learned may be applied to a wide range of creative projects and will appeal to teens, experimenters of any age and foundational practices. The workshop is free and open to the general public. The workshop will culminate with a story-sharing supper held in conjunction with the exhibition opening. Picked fruit, apple bread and spreads will be served.

3. *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, 2018.

A multi-channel audio video exhibition.

Harrop-Procter is a rural community surrounded by historical fruit orchards, mountainous meadows and a train rail line that hugs the lakeside and rides from west to east daily. Where once paddleboats used to navigate the social and political economy of the lake, now cars, trucks and fibre optic cables carry and connect us together. Yet, these historical relations remain, shaping our imaginaries with deep grooves in the senses of the land. On the hillsides in and around Sunshine Bay, neatly parceled residential lots now cut through what was once a thriving fruit producing region, connected by the water and commuter rail. The aged trees, many of them grey, gnarled, and half broken, buried up to their branches in tall grass, continue to produce thousands of fruits, budding for the human and hydro energy flows that once swept them down the bay. Thinking on this, my mother, sitting in her kitchen in Harrop-Procter, staring out at the ripening fruit from the window, said: "People eat apples, apples grow on trees, and get shipped using those trains somewhere for someone else to eat them." The aim of this work is to give this sentiment life in all of its dimensions, even though the trains don't take the fruit anymore.

In *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2018), artists prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet wonder where those apples have gone, and what geographic imaginaries might have taken them there. We propose to launch a series of micro enquiries into memory and sticky time (Lightman, 2011) using drone and smartphone technology cameras. This work aims to reveal the complex physical, economic, and ontological geographies of human relations with vibrant objects in the landscape. We will present a series of aerial video vignettes focused on capturing how these relational networks of memory, material, and time are often felt but unseen, though our molecules are literally intertwined. This work will bring the view up close in the orchards, following trains along their journeys elsewhere, to investigate and capture these unknown micro topographies (see Fig. 116-119). The moving images will be scaled to the gallery space. When projected onto the gallery walls and structures, they will bear witness to our senses of, and struggles with, time. The work will require controlled lighting, with access to projectors and sound amplification resources. An ambient sound score composed of field recordings taken in situ will accompany the moving imagery and be amplified throughout the gallery.



Figure 120. prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, 2019. In Process.

4.8.7 Oxygen Art Centre Curatorial Conversation: September 12, 2019

Oxygen Art Centre's former Executive Director and Curator Genevieve Robertson, Darren Fleet and I met on a warm fall morning at Oxygen Art Centre to discuss our two-person residency and exhibition. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I developed a trusting working relationship with Robertson during the initial formation of *Floating in the In-Between* (2019), which was produced with Oxygen Art Centre.

The following question and answer style of conversation transpired in person and over email while Robertson was transitioning out of her role as the Executive Director. What emerges from this text are the themes, ideas and reflections from the 2019 exhibition and performance.

Robertson is a visual artist with a background in environmental studies, and the former Executive Director at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, BC. Her drawings are often composed of fossil, mineral and plant-based pigments collected regionally and map a visceral and long-term engagement with materiality, alterity, and the politics of place.

Fleet is an artist, writer, photographer, media educator, and PhD Candidate at Simon Fraser University. His artistic and research interests include, environmental discourse, affect theory, petrocultures, faith-based social movements and the cultural politics of fossil fuels in Canada. Darren and I are married and co-parent two children. Since 2009, we have worked collaboratively in various artistic forms including the acclaimed indie bands Tyrannohorse and The Adulthood, in text, public engagement and other media. However, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) is our first collaborative foray as a working duo in an artist residency and exhibition.

prOphecy sun (PS): How did you select the artwork for the exhibition?

Genevieve Robertson (GR): *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019), was chosen by a selection committee made up of artists, performers and musicians from Nelson, BC. The committee and I were interested in the work's regional relevance to the Kootenays, and the ways in which the artists were using both embodied practice and technology to explore regional and intergenerational history.

PS: What was the theme of the exhibition?

GR: The themes of the exhibition were embodied practice, media and technology to explore personal and collective history in relationship to place, with a specific focus on familial loss. The ideas of both *Nostalgia* and *Geography* were explored both through a lens of personal experience and simultaneously a critical lens that problematized them. In this way, the exhibition was in dialogue with its own contradictions.

PS: What was the format of the exhibition?

GR: The format of the show was a two-person residency and exhibition at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, BC. The format also included an exhibition catalogue.

PS: For you, what are the tensions in this work? And, do you see a link between data and creativity?

GR: When I think about the piece, the data that comes to mind is the work you were doing with drone technology. but I'm curious just for you to talk a little bit about those dynamic tensions in that body of work.

PS: Does drone technology change or alter your perspective of the work?

Yeah, I can see that and to me, it seems also like there's a disruption of a singular narrative, that's really interesting and a singular perspective—like you're both viewed from above. I also have a sense that where some shots feel like you put the viewer in your

position and it's very intimate, because there's a smaller scale or more intimate or subjective approach to how you're filming. Paired with this kind of eerie, uneasy dream like quality. I find this really key, being able to go back and forth. It leaves these interesting gaps or spaces in the narrative for me to insert myself into, in a way that it wouldn't if it was just, okay I'm watching you and you're kind of the main character.

PS: Yes, that was very intentional. I want and I hope that when somebody experiences a piece that I make, that they are feeling like they are suddenly welcomed into part of a story. Or they are witnessing something and they are either that person, or I could be anybody.

PS: Can you please listen to this for a minute? It is a composition I made that features my mother's and daddy's voice, my brother Trinity playing piano and me humming tones in sequences. Did you notice a difference between the room sounds and the piece in the headphones?

GR: Yes. I was really shocked when I put the headphones on, at how much that other layer of sound added, not just to the layer of experience, but it was like a whole other emotional perspective came through that wasn't there in the sound that was just environmental. So yeah, it was really powerful. So, it's interesting because there's this layer of very personal narrative, but then, also, some of the ways you guys were writing, or articulating, your work at the beginning was much more political, and really about the movement of material.

PS: Something that came up in our artist talk was this tension between the two of us, as I am weaving very personal narratives together and Darren's weavings about the landscape are much more political. Do you see both in this work?

GR: I see both. There's definitely an assortment of personal items and other materials that you're specifically bringing into the gallery, that do reflect the history that connects to commerce and trade and colonization, too. Or, settlement of the land.

Darren Fleet (DF): I see it as a work that is in dialogue with its own tensions and contradictions. So, it's always difficult, because these are obviously two really problematic terms put together: Nostalgia and Geography. Ultimately, because art is always in dialogue with its broader cultural context, but it's so interesting to do a work that's much more personal, because there's nothing problematic at all with your own story. In this way, this is very much prOphecy's own story and it's my experience, too, and what I have always found interesting that this is a place that has such meaning and attachment, but prOphecy's never lived there. So it's like a geography of the mind...

PS: Did you read the wall text? There are ten years of stories condensed into one story.

GR: Yes. I was wondering about that and your choice of words. I feel like that list really does shift ... it adds another layer that ... it wouldn't be ... the politics of the space without the text laid out how it is.

DF: This list was just a way to put that into dialogue, an atlas could be significantly bigger. Yes, orchard production, and economic production, and that just, at the get-go seemed to not be as possible. It seemed like a much bigger story to tell.

PS: We originally focused on the railroads and orchard production. But we scaled down the concept because the residency was much shorter than originally planned.

GR: But it wasn't just about that, right? It was about finding a way to tell this particular story in a way that wasn't too much like an artistic essay, made through film.

PS: Yes, and I think, too, we have to honour own experiences in this space, and our family, too.

GR: And it seems to me, you responded in an authentic way, to what's going on there, for you, with your personal history, but then, what I find interesting is the issue that you're talking about, of, I don't know the of words you would use, but the polarity

between the political and personal, I think, is something that a lot of people experience. You have this sense of nostalgia for a place, and then there's guilt around the nostalgia you have or the connection you have, because we're living in a world where we're aware that this is not our land, and there's so many layers of complications, and life experiences.

PS: I don't know if we can have too much of this, but there is a tension between these layers and layers of experience. So, even shooting, and us negotiating with using the drone in the landscape, us with the tree. When we were down on the rail line, we actually got a big letter that was put on the side of our car because we were parked in the wrong spot... And then, the negotiations, even of the technologies themselves in this space...because we had to acquire basically everything excluding this one, and in that process, acquiring ... trying to negotiate what we were using, and trying to find something that could work... because we wanted these overhead shots, of the space.

DF: That's what's really interesting is, every part of this work here is the result of that, often, sometimes, quite intense negotiations. For example, this tree, which we asked our friend Andy to help get a chain saw, and bringing in his

expertise, to figure out how to get this in the truck, on the road, without losing any of the apples.


GR: I find this video where you're working with the actual materials, in this one, in a different way than others, and it has some kind of ritualistic building is there some process that you're doing, that's hard to pinpoint, but you have agency in this video, more than in the other ones, where you're just a subject. What's happening here?

PS: It was the last video we shot, and, yes, I am building a raft—a raft to somewhere.

GR: Yeah, and that came out of the process? It wasn't something that you expected?

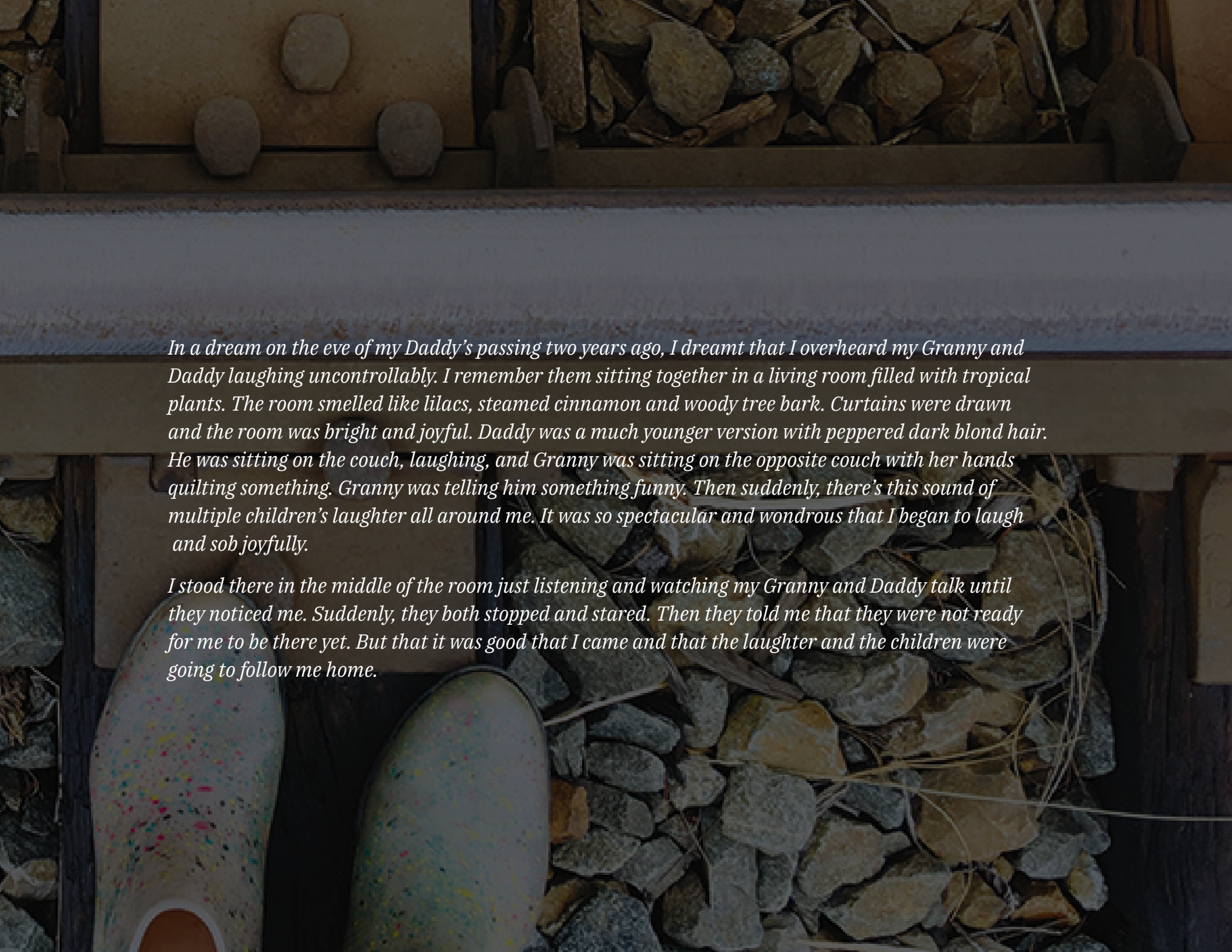
PS: No. Again, I was just responding to the materials in the space, and the landscape. And maybe to the weight of the time we had spent making the work. It was also the final shoot of our residency. And, yes, there's something entirely futile about it too.

GR: It's like you're striving for it, but it's not going to be a raft that's floating. So, in the end, there's a struggle built into it, too.



INTERLUDE

*A Dream About Daddy
and Granny*



In a dream on the eve of my Daddy's passing two years ago, I dreamt that I overheard my Granny and Daddy laughing uncontrollably. I remember them sitting together in a living room filled with tropical plants. The room smelled like lilacs, steamed cinnamon and woody tree bark. Curtains were drawn and the room was bright and joyful. Daddy was a much younger version with peppered dark blond hair. He was sitting on the couch, laughing, and Granny was sitting on the opposite couch with her hands quilting something. Granny was telling him something funny. Then suddenly, there's this sound of multiple children's laughter all around me. It was so spectacular and wondrous that I began to laugh and sob joyfully.

I stood there in the middle of the room just listening and watching my Granny and Daddy talk until they noticed me. Suddenly, they both stopped and stared. Then they told me that they were not ready for me to be there yet. But that it was good that I came and that the laughter and the children were going to follow me home.

CHAPTER 5

*A Cumulative
Discussion on Expanded
Feminist Materialism*



Figure 121. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #13, 2020.

I AM CAUGHT UP IN the perplexing dialectics of deep and large; of the infinitely diminished that deepens, -or the large that extends beyond all limits." Can one hear oneself close one's eyes? How accurately must one hear in order to hear the geometry of echoes in an old, peculiarly experienced house? (Bachelard, 1994, ix).

In the quote above, Gaston Bachelard writes about an old house; the nooks and crannies, the deep and the large sections, and how things extend beyond. As a poetic meditation on the interrelationship and mutability of form, he makes a case for seeing, feeling and sensing beyond the visual evidence or other cultural signifiers—what he calls: reverie (Bachelard, 1994).

This chapter draws from these notions and cumulatively discusses the poetics of the eight artworks: *Traces of Motherhood* (2016), *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017), *Hunting Self* (2018-19), *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019), *Floating in the in-between* (2019), *Carrying Others* (2019), and *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) to further demonstrate the creative elements of an expanded approach to materiality.

I conduct a close reading of each artwork through the following lenses: 1) Poetics of Research-Creation; 2) Narrative; and, 3) Carriance. Understand in this way, I argue that each of these three vantages are essential elements to Feminist Materialist Research-Creation because they allow for differing engagements and forms of body-environment-syntheses. As mentioned earlier, I define body-environment-syntheses as a feminist sensibility that blends together technologies, digital and physical spaces, bodies, spectator and objects in new, collaborative and meaningful ways.

The first category, Poetics of Research-Creation, describes the artwork key elements, creative principles or theories of form.⁸⁵

As David Bordwell points out, poetics are a form of poiesis, or making. He states:

The poetics of any artistic medium studies the finished work as the result of a process of construction—a process that includes a craft component (such as rules of thumb), the more general principles according to which the work is composed, and its functions, effects, and uses. Any inquiry into the fundamental principles by which artifacts in any representational medium are constructed, and the effects which flow from those principles, can fall within the domain of poetics (Bordwell, 2012, 12).

In this sense, the poetics are the driving or fundamental principles, shape and composition of how an artwork is constructed.⁸⁶ Poetics are also something innately explored in the making of this experimental document. This document argues for an open mind and approach to viewing as the visual and written propositions in this experimental approach are intended to be generative and iterative and give space for new stories to emerge.

The second category, Narrative, investigates the way each artwork is shown in relation to story parameters such as plot and storyworld. The term plot refers to the main events, sequences or overarching premise of a story. While, the term storyworld refers to images or text of a world, or the intersubjective relationships and other conceptualized constructs (Thon, 2009). Janet Murray states that detailed storyworlds can encourage spectators to believe in it (Murray, 2012). While Henry Jenkins describes narrative as "spatial stories which are held together by broadly defined goals and conflicts" and that the "plot gets pushed forward by the character's movement across the map" (Jenkins, 2004, 239- 240).

As I have demonstrated throughout this document, stories are important and deserve recognition as they are part of the research and life energy and are arguably integral aspects of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation practice. For instance, the interludes, artistic expressions, material compositions and imagery present stories from my childhood, adulthood and beyond. In this sense, stories are the glue, the anchor in the

storm, the flagship, or the architectural compass that helps us remember, see the through lines, and navigate the world (Solnit, 2013).⁸⁷

The third category, Carriance, offers a contemporary feminist approach to collaboration, lived experience that emphasizes various forms of knowledge holding, or more-than-material dimensions of place (Ettinger, 2006; 2016; Van Doreen, 2016). This lens considers the immersive, embodied and relational elements of the artwork such as spectatorship and how audiences can oscillate between heightened states of immediacy and hypermediation (Bolter and Grusin, 2000). As Janet Murray suggests, immersion is an active state of belief whereby the audience is absorbed and experiencing something within a digital environment (Murray, 2011). Braidotti takes up immersion as sensory engagement, suggesting that:

The point of convergence is the quest for creativity, in the form of experimenting with the immersion of one's sensibility in the field of forces—formatted as by music, colour, sound, light, speed, temperature, intensity (Braidotti, 2014, 172).

Here Braidotti suggests that immersion is a point of convergence and sensibility. Through these lenses, I suggest that Carriance as both an action and a method, presents immersive, enmeshed, complex ways to view and give space for the poetics, the design (media artifacts and environment), narrative, and the immersive or sensorial experience or effects of the design on the audience—to emerge (Murray, 1998). In this sense, Carriance does not privilege one method, approach or experience over another. Instead, Carriance, lifts up and values intermingling and collaboration. Thus, the poetics of the eight artworks reveal the entanglements of Carriance and Feminist Materialist Research-Creation. In particular, the artworks propel, transform and demonstrate how interdisciplinary conversation happens and becomes a shaping space for convergence and experimentation with “variables co-existing along a continuum” (Braidotti, 2014, 172). This emergent space is the Feminist Materialist zone, whereby speculative, rhizomatic and experimentally charged

things happen. This is the heart of expanded approaches to Feminist Materialist Research-Creation. For instance, I see emergent feminist thought as valuing acts of bodily and affective translation with and alongside a multitude of actants. What I mean is that feminist approaches are vitalist and account for and value materiality, human and non-human existence and life energy. In this sense, creative practice brings attention to the tiniest details by fabricating fantastical otherness and enabling multiplicities of intellectual, social and emotional engagement. As Diana Coole and Samantha Frost point out, creativity is linked to matter, and matter is agential, self-organizing, and accentuates non-human agency and human relationships (Coole and Frost, 2010). Argued another way, creative configurations are acts of “emptying and opening up” ourselves to new encounters (Braidotti, 2014, 171). Hence, I argue that Expanded Feminist Materialist approaches consider, acknowledge and draw attention to notions of entanglement, immersion (nearness), consciousness, bodily awareness and various forms of aural, tactile, visual, environmental and technological synthesis.

The following section presents the eight expressions through these three lenses: 1) Poetics of Research-Creation; 2) Narrative; and, 3) Carriance. As I mentioned above, each of these categories demonstrate the complexities of entanglement.

Traces of Motherhood

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) is a three-channel installation that shows three looping frames moving of a female figure and child moving through various terrain with a large weather balloon. The piece was shown in two exhibitions with two different sets of configurations. Firstly, the piece was shown at Simon Fraser University's Surrey Campus. Here the installation consisted of two looping projections that were situated on two levels of a public stairwell. The first consisted of a 3-foot projection that followed the pathway of the stairwell, which also included sprinkler pipes, concrete floors, fluorescent and natural light, windows, doors

and other challenging architectural features (see Fig. 14-16). On the first level, one projector sits on the floor with small speakers placed on either side. On the lower level wall of the stairwell landing two 12-inch looping projections illuminate the corner walls. The images were aligned in response to the adjacent windows situated above and beside the two projections. The projections were played from a USB stick that was attached to the body of each projector. Collectively, the three projections were displayed in single horizontal panels. Each projection was a separate view of the same location. The first panel had tall grass and vivid skyline. The second presented a marsh with trees and two figures, one walking, and the other more ghostlike jumping to the ground. The third panel showed lush grass and two figures moving across the frame. The audience was able to view the work while moving up or down the public stairwell over one day. The accompanying soundtrack consisted of birds, vocal tones and movement textures that reverberated throughout the stairwell. Secondly, the piece was exhibited in a group show at Unit/ Pitt Gallery in Vancouver, BC. In this iteration, the video work was shown on two medium sized monitors and through one projection, which was illuminated through the galleries front exterior windows. Both of the monitors and the single projection were hung close to the ground and from the adjacent walls. The images were clear and more defined than the first installation of the work at SFU.

Traces of Motherhood (2016) is both an open and a closed work. The piece offers audiences unique ways to engage with the material. For example, the viewer can listen to or see the piece accidentally from various levels of a staircase or intentionally in an open gallery space. As Umberto Eco writes:

A work of art is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole...Hence, every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself (Eco, 1989, 4).

In this quote, Eco describes how every reception of an artwork becomes a unique creative experience because it takes on new perspectives and interpretations (Eco, 1989). What is particularly important here is that a successful work will have multiple interpretations, which in turn increases its “aesthetic validity” and transforms our perception of a space (Eco, 1989, 3).

2. Narrative *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) is divided up into three concurrent stories about mothering that overlap. In each video a pregnant figure wields a larger-than-life weather balloon. The videos as feature a small child with a white hat on. Indeed, the title, *Traces of Motherhood*, refers to the act of mothering and how shapes, scores, traces of the act are left behind, temporal and live beyond the moment. Thus, each of the three video panels portray abstract visual aspects of the story that show the migratory movement of the mothered form traversing across fields of grass and sky.

The artwork is thematically concerned with vitalist, more-than-humanist positions that decenter the human form, and materialist approaches that consider matter as vibrant and possessing an ability to persuade or estrange people (Bennett, 2010, viii). As the mothered, pregnant, flâneuse form moves through the landscape, she takes up, bypasses, embraces and liberates structures and reimagines space (Braidotti, 2014; De Certeau, 1984). The artwork intentionally is abstract, lopping and depicts time as both flattened and extended. Lev Manovich describes this flattening as an act of composting, whereby historical and present time fold together (Manovich, 2001, 159).

3. Carriage In *Traces of Motherhood* (2016) the projections, screens and installation apparatus are small scale and intimately positioned to attract viewers to bend down or experience the work by viewing the work in public space. This is important because as Adams suggests, immersion is a state of consciousness, or perception whereby an audience feels physically, mentally, emotionally or sensory immersed (Adams, 2004). While McLuhan argues that works of art are either cool,

or, hot (McLuhan, 1998, 246). By this he means that in a cool medium, many details are left for the viewer to fill in. On the flip side, in a hot medium, everything is complete and there is little room left for interpretation or engagement (McLuhan, 1998, 246). Through this lens this artwork takes up an intermediary approach and is neither hot, nor, cold and leaves much room for interpretation.

Domestic Cupboards

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) is a single-channel installation that was shown in the all-female art/mamas group exhibition, Sheila: Women, Art, and Production, at the Fazakas Gallery in Vancouver, BC (see Fig. 38, 39). The piece consists of a single horizontal frame that is projected onto the wall two feet off of the ground of the gallery in a 4X6 foot circumference. The projector sits on top of a tripod stand three feet away from the wall. The projection is situated beside a variety of two-dimensional artwork that are hung vertically and horizontally from the gallery walls. The moving images are of a kitchen view and are presented continuously until the images fade to white, and then the loop starts anew. The soundscore is ambient and consists of a mixture of tones and textures such as cupboard doors closing, baby's cries, thumping, walking and a refrigerator hum.

2. Narrative The artwork presents a series of moving images that depict a mother with a baby and toddler climbing in and out of kitchen cupboards (see Fig. 35). The piece is divided up into five narrative sequences: 1) both children and mother moving in and out of the cupboards; 2) the mother nursing the baby with toddler inside cupboards; 3) the mother and baby; 4) mother climbing in and out of the cupboards while baby plays with household items; and 5) the baby playing alone with kitchen utensils. The plot is straightforward and shows domestic and child-like vantage points, ambient sounds, maternal actions such as breastfeeding, and other mundane

or everyday moments.

3. Carriage *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) captures a minimalist setting. It is small in scale and situated beside other two-dimensional artworks that are larger in form and presentation. The work is in an indoor controlled environment with adequate lighting. However, the height of the artwork invites viewers to lean down or sit on the floor to engage with the work. In this sense the piece pushes audiences to be focused in their engagement. This research aligns with Laura Ermi and Frans Mayra's ideas on immersive experiences being tied to digital components and how works can either be interactive or immersive. They suggest a three-part model of immersion which includes sensory, challenge-based and imaginative approaches to digital experience (Ermi and Mayra, 2005, 1). Through this lens, audience members can approach the work from various ways of sensory engagement.

Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017) is a 60-minute live movement and sound performance and two-channel audio and video installation, which was shown at (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios in Vancouver BC. The artwork is a small-scale two-channel work that consists of two horizontal frames that are projected onto adjacent walls of the Gold Saucer studios. Both panels are 2X4 feet in scale and circumference. The projections were from two projectors placed on the ground of the studio. The room was darkened with ambient light from which created bright illuminations that bounced off the surrounding walls and floor closest to the projections. Situated in the middle of the room laid a larger-than-life inflatable form. The room had four walls, three of which were lined with glass mirrors, and windows. The audience sat on chairs and on the floor adjacent to the projections and inflatable form. The two

projections were placed onto the two remaining walls of the space. The projections were looping and available for viewing both before, during and after the performance. The two projections depict miniature versions of the live performance and include a female form moving with an inflatable plastic skin-like form across the studio form. However, in the videos, the room is brightly lit by warm, daylight. The projections also had no sound and the moving imaged looped and faded into white and repeated the same sequence of movement.

The exhibition and durational performance took place over one evening. The performance included live sound which echoed throughout the space and ended with a figure inside the inflatable form. Besides the light emitted from the projections, the room was lit by four flood lights which were placed on the floor around the inflatable shape. During the performance, the lights illuminated the room, the performing body and the inflatable form with a rotating collage of white, incandescent blue and green light.

2. Narrative *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017) offers a series of visual abstractions, improvised movement sequences and ambient vocal compositions. The narrative is about shared dream-like, liminal ecologies of place—where bodies, experience and time floats and exists and meld together. The plot is advanced in six ways: 1) by initiating the story with the two projections and the inflatable form on display for viewing; 2) making a layered sound composition; 3) moving with the form throughout the space; 4) offering viewers distinct physical cues to push, pull or move the Beast around during the performance; and, 5) ending the piece by inserting a human figure inside the inflatable form and fading out the sound. Each of these approaches help tell the thematic story and signals an important message about our complex, meshed and encounters and how we mitigate lived experiences within technologically driven environments.

The piece is executed in a dynamic and emergent way that highlights abstract perspectives on performance and interdisciplinary research. For example, the piece creates delicate and temporal

sequences of sound and movement that thread throughout the gallery space (see Fig. 48). As the performance unfolds, the audience is engaged or encouraged to touch, push, pull, and/ or lift the Beast away from their bodies. Eventually as the piece closes, the Beast deflates, and the performer enters inside the form while the vocal sounds fade out.

As the piece ends, the narrative shift focus. As Marie-Laure Ryan suggests:

One that brings a world to the mind (setting) and populates it with intelligent agents (characters). These agents participate in actions and happenings (events, plot), which cause global changes in the narrative world. Narrative is thus a mental representation of casually connected states and events that captures a segment in the history of a world and its members (Ryan, 2004, 337).

In this sense, those who participate in the process of making the world also believe in the world. In the performance, audience members actively participated in the orchestration of the Beast as it moved close and above the floor, from body to body.

3. Carriance *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between* (2017) is complex, temporal and emergent. For example, the two small-scale projections depict miniature versions of the live performance. The projections include a female form moving with an inflatable plastic skin-like form across the studio form. However, in videos the room is brightly lit by warm, daylight and no audience members participate in the movement of the Beast across the studio. It is just a female form, engulfed in plastic layers, surrounded a bright light and a wood floor. The projections also had no sound and the moving images loop and fade into a white blur and then repeat again, time and time again. As mentioned earlier, immersion is complex and can be defined as a state of consciousness in which the audience or spectator feels sensory engagement—physically, emotionally, sensory and mentally transformed (Adams, 2004). This artwork

demonstrates enmeshment through various forms of immersion that compliment and complicate the description of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation.

Hunting Self

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Hunting Self* (2018-19) is a looping 60-minute, large-scale 15-channel immersive sound installation that was installed at the 15+ Soundscape Gallery in the Arts Commons, in Calgary Alberta. The piece consisted of 15 separate audio tracks that were installed through 15 spatialized speakers that were positioned throughout the length of the Arts Commons public walkway (see Fig. 59). The rig set-up consisted of an Apple Mac Pro computer, amplified through a MOTU 24Ao USB audio interface which drove the fifteen channels and twelve ceiling speaker channels and three sub-channels. The ceiling amplification was positioned throughout the Arts Commons' +15 corridor, in left and right sequences. Each speaker was designated to a specific sound file and played continually throughout the exhibition (Arts Commons, Website).

2. Narrative *Hunting Self* (2018-19) tells the abstract and fantastical story of a nomadic, liminal figure moving through space and time. The sounds offer audiences an array of textures, processed vocal patterns, field recordings that fade in and out of sonic range as they traverse across the gallery walkway. The piece is divided up into three segments: 1) the introduction with vocal swirls and cascading tensions and tonal drops; 2) the rise which features powerful and rhythmical patterns and field recordings of air, birds and lush forest sounds; and, 3) the conclusion which features an array of vocal sequences that weave together as time unfolds.

Together the 15 separate audio tracks become a meshed composition that incorporates granulated, dispersed and floaty sounds that capture moments in time. In this way, the piece is also visually abstract as no specific landscape is distinguishable

or evident. The composition is a drone (consecutive sounds) of vocal washings that loop, sink and climb over one another. The sounds construct distinct textures that change how the audience experiences the space. For example, as the audience migrates from one part of the public corridor to another, the soundscape changes in tone, texture, delivery, and reverberates on surfaces, windows, walls, ceiling, floor, and is felt through the body. As I mentioned earlier, these subtle tonal changes drive the plot forward and anticipate an audience moving from the beginning to the end of the corridor over a duration of time.

3. Carriance *Hunting Self* (2018-19) is a “work in movement,” as no two viewings or listening sessions are the same (Zimmerman, 2004, 158). As Eric Zimmerman points out there are four levels of interactivity: cognitive interactivity, functional interactivity, cultural interactivity and explicit interactivity (Zimmerman, 2004, 158-159). Like Eco, Zimmerman suggests that audiences can view or interact with an interdisciplinary or digital work over several visits and each subsequent viewing can reveal something new. In this way, this artwork provides audiences a unique vantage point where their experience of an encounter can change with each subsequent viewing.

Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019) is a three-channel audio and video piece that was shown at gallery@ CALIT2 at the San Diego Qualcomm Institute. The piece consists of a medium-scale triptych that was shown on three horizontal screens that played concurrently. The screens were attached to three stands in the gallery atrium. Each screen panel presents a female form, semi-clothed, painted in white, standing in a dark, open space. Each frame however features a different female figure performing subtle hand motions and choreography. The figures look forward and never change their gaze. Certain elements

are mirrored more than once including hand gestures of touching their skin or necks or stretching limbs in all directions. Other focus points or key frames are spliced blips of bacteria images that morph the figure and then disappear. Each video contains a slightly varied sequence that sometimes glitch or disappear. Over time, the videos begin to disintegrate and then fade to black, and then the process begins again. The sound composition consists of vocal textures, breath, heartbeats, and amplified recordings of bacteria growing under a microscope. The sounds wash over and follow the movement of the three figures as they move in and out of focus.

2. Narrative *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019) tells the abstract story of three mothered bodies moving in space and caring for bacteria that is on their skin. The title refers to mothered bodies and relationships to bacteria and technologies. The story reveals a speculative approach to spectatorship. For example, the three bodies are watching the spectator and being watched back. By this I suggest that they do not turn their eyes away from the camera or change their position. They are in a continual state of remediation and immersion. This offers multiple interpretations, or points of convergence between the bodies and technology, which in turn increases its “aesthetic validity” and transforms our perception of the space they are in (Eco, 1989, 3).

3. Carriance *Mothering Bacteria: The Body as an Interface* (2019) provokes the active creation of belief as the viewer watches the three figures morph, glitch, become bacteria and fade out of frame. The artwork requires more focused viewing as it was shown in a public atrium with heavy foot traffic and other institutional noise and activity. This type of immersion pushes the audience to accept the disruptions and environmental inconsistencies. Murray articulates this type of focussed immersion as an absorbing experience that accepts the work regardless of the incompleteness of the surrounding environment (Murray, 2011). She states:

[The] experience of the interactor...a sense of being contained within a space or state of mind that is separate from ordinary experience, more focused and absorbing, and requiring different assumptions and actions (like swimming when immersed in water) (Murray, Web).

This artwork challenges audiences to focus on the work through diverse focus points.

Floating in the In-Between

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) is a 15-minute live performance and two-channel installation and that was shown at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson BC. The piece consists of two horizontal projections that illuminated two walls of the gallery space. The first projection was 2X 4 feet in scale, situated 12 inches from the floor. The second projection was hung from the ceiling and directed at the wall above and across the installation. The installation engulfed one third of the gallery wall and floor space. The sound composition comprised of a mixture of live vocal improvisations, breath and field recordings of water. The two panels depicted the moving images of a ghostlike female figure repeatedly floating and sinking in water.

2. Narrative Employing an abstract approach, this artwork tells the story of a woman struggling to stay above water, both metaphorically and figuratively. The work portrays her struggles and efforts in slow motion sequences. Thematically, the work is concerned with shared ecologies and pushes the audience to consider the voiceless, new mothers, who are not able to care for themselves when depression sets in. The moving images show her moving but, not in this realm.

Complimenting these notions, Krauss conceptualizes narrative as physical and metaphorical states of being, in particular, simultaneously existing (Krauss, 1994). This work offers a moment of reflection for someone that is helpless and extends the realm of

possibility for her to see. On the flip side, this work relies heavily on environmental storytelling and offers a unique vantage point of a form falling through water (Jenkins, 2004).

3. Carriance *Floating in the In-Between* (2019) presents viewers with various forms of immersion and engagement. As Murray notes, immersion is a form of agency and transformation and changes how we experience ourselves and our environments. She states:

The experience of being transported to an elaborately simulated place is pleasurable in itself, regardless of the fantasy content...Immersion is a metaphorical term derived from the physical experience of being submerged in water...We seek... the sensation of being surrounded by a completely other reality, as different as water is from air, that takes over all our attention, our whole perceptual apparatus (Murray, 1997, 98).

Here Murray suggests that audiences can participate and enjoy the experience of learning to “swim,” and similarly learn to embrace the participatory activity of exploring new environments or digital artworks (Murray, 1997, 99).

Carrying Others

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Carrying Others* (2019) is a three-channel audio, video installation that features a series of aerial vignettes using drones that survey and surveil the landscape. The artwork was shown in a group exhibition in the Thornlea White Gallery at the University of Exeter, UK. The artwork was presented alongside a variety of other artworks in traditional and accidental formats throughout the White Building Gallery and Alexander Building. The piece consists of three horizontal screens that are 2 X4 feet. Each frame was hung on a free-standing pedestal adjacent to a wall and between a set of stairs. The work is situated at the bottom of

the stairwell. The three panels play in their own concurrent loop and together. The sound ambient sound composition is played throughout the gallery. The video segments depict a female form moving with an inflatable form in an expansive field. The camera angles are from a drone’s perspective above. The sound composition is a vocal drone of tones and granulated textures.

2. Narrative *Carrying Others* (2019) tells the abstract story of a figure moving through urban space. Each panel depicts a figure who holds and glides with a larger-than-life shimmering object in unconventional movement patterns. The positive and negative between the figure and the landscape create shadows. These shadows are highlighted throughout the entire work and help the plot shift as the figure eventually moves out of focus or leaves the frame. Thematically, the artwork explores our relationships to nature and other forms in the landscape This work aligns with Lev Manovich’s notions about spatialization, in which the lasting effects of post-modernism is that artmakers refuse to use grand narratives anymore in the process of making and thus flatten historical time and notions of privilege and space over prescribed notions of time (Manovich, 2001).

3. Carriance *Carrying Others* (2019) presents spectators with a straightforward immersive experience. The viewers can encounter the work from a distance or intimately by standing or passing by on their way elsewhere up and down a set of stairs. However, as Manovich suggests, immersion is more complex than the act of moving from one location to the next. For instance, as the digital experience of “cinema...now becom[es] the cultural interface, a toolbox for all cultural communication” (Manovich, 2001, 85). This work highlights how Carriance can take on various types of engagement.

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard

1. Poetics of Research-Creation *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) is a seven-channel immersive installation that was shown at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson BC. The artwork consists of seven projections that illuminate the lower sections of each wall. Each projector presents a 4X6 horizontal frame that plays from a dedicated USB stick. The projectors all sit on the floor. Each of the panels depicts moving images of a figure moving through an orchard and railroad in Sunshine Bay near Nelson BC. The installation also consists of six apple trees that are suspended in an oblong circle formation around the gallery amongst other assorted ephemera. The main soundtrack features an array of anthropophagic, geophonic, and biophonic sounds spliced with sounds of a family in a kitchen with piano and voice alongside field recordings of the night train.

2. Narrative The story is layered, complex and fantastical at the same time. Looking to the land and its living and non-living materials for direction, this artwork is a meditation on both the presence and the absence of memory embedded in the landscape. The work depicts a female figure traversing through varied terrain. She is not topologically bound, nomadic, and transitions between technology systems, networks, and place (Haraway, 2018; Braidotti, 2006). The first and second projection depict a form moving across railroad tracks in a red dress. The third and fourth moving feature an above shot of the figure moving through and across an orchard. The fifth frame presents a child running through long uncut grass. The sixth depicts vantage points from high above view of

motions to build a raft next to the lake. The seventh projection depicts wonderous views of the mountains and skyline overlooking the family orchard.

3. Carriance This work showcases various perspectives and performances that acknowledge past, present and future temporalities.⁸⁸ For instance, the six apple trees standing on the concrete floor, held suspended from the ceiling with fish line. The room smelling like an orchard as the trees were still covered in ripening apples. Each of these aspects created a sensorial experience that heightened the audience's sense of immersion. Murray writes about immersion and interactivity as characteristic pleasures of digital environments. She states:

Immersive experiences are disrupted by inconsistency and incompleteness of the environment and reinforced by encyclopedic detail and a sense of vast spaces within clearly marked boundaries. Immersion is further reinforced in digital environments by the active creation of belief, by which the interactor is cued to explore and to take actions within the immersive world and is rewarded for the actions with appropriate responses. (Murray, web).

Here the emphasis is on the power of immersion to reinforce or activate a belief that the digital world is real. This is similar to what Catherine Elwes suggests as immersive sensibilities. She states "spectators [enact] an expanded spatial awareness, a phenomenological sensitivity to all that is actual and present within a bounded space" (Elwes, 2015, 1). This artwork takes up Elwes description in new and enhanced ways that draw attention to the senses.⁸⁹ The next section further discusses the artworks and how they demonstrate various aspects of Carriance and entanglement of Feminist Materialist Research-Creation.



Figure 122. prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, 2019. Process shot. Photo courtesy of Darren Fleet.

5.1 Discussion

The image on the left was taken on the third day of shooting *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) (see page 290). The colour photograph portrays various reflections of two bodies and smartphones, as seen through a van window. Superimposed on top of the window are two sentences that read: “No PARKING Will BETOWED.” I include this image here to draw attention to the complexity of images used throughout this document, and how they can portray the blurred space between words and bodies, between image and text, between reality and fiction.⁹⁰ The image also mirrors aspects of the three categories discussed earlier: Poetics of Research-Creation, Narrative, and Carriance by highlighting sensory levels of engagement. Arguably, the image exists in a transient space between past and present, and are a view, within a view, within a view. For example, multiple perspectives of prised or spliced body parts and phone camera angles are revealed through blurred and obscure mirror positions. What this image suggests is that increasingly, photographs or video stills show other versions, assemblages, viewpoints, perspectives, machinic processes, and narratives of human experience—both past and present.⁹¹ Thus, expanded practices embrace personal approaches to photographic or other machinic technologies and the breadth of ways that tools can amplify, increase and carry our knowledge of corporeal and digital relations—onward. This section builds on these notions and further discusses the entanglement of the artworks and how vital Expanded Feminist Materialist approaches are to knowledge formation.

Collectively, the eight artworks demonstrate dynamic, multisensory, and temporal Feminist Materialist approaches to Research-Creation. Each of the artworks present various sensorial and technological approaches to installation, performance and engagement. More to the point, I see each of these approaches as interconnected, experiential, sculptural and immersive because

they incorporate new approaches to technology and the performing body. Much like this document, which weaves personal stories alongside aesthetic poetics and other ephemera, the eight artworks acknowledge the livingness of knowledge. For instance, knowledge is experienced in the body, through our limbs, eyes, ears and beyond. These artworks present a snapshot of something in the process of becoming; each piece informs the next through iteration, translation and innovation. In this way, knowledge is continually being formed, created and in turn brings vital new perspectives to the next encounter.

Considered another way, each of these artworks employ aspects of Carriance; “emptying out and opening up” which leaves crucial space for new expansive systems or other modes of viewership to develop (Braidotti, 2014). This emergent way of creating, authoring, collaborating and mitigating takes up critical aesthetic models that enact and take up new forms of “technological intimacy and mediated entanglement” (Mondloch, 2018, 101).⁹² What this means is that Carriance can be more than one method, form or approach with much potential to challenge, encourage and elicit embodied ways of viewership. Like the Poetics of Research-Creation and Narrative, Carriance is important because it offers a way to discuss the immersive qualities of Feminist Materialist practice—body-environment-synthesis. In other words, Carriance helps to shape how we encounter, see, feel and understand our relationships to each other, to other bodies, technology and beyond.

Indeed, as Mondloch writes, affect, museum spectacle and audience engagement require multiple levels of mitigation.⁹³ She describes this as feminist approaches to spectatorship that elicit sites of “aesthetic-critical contemplation” and how installations are sites of participatory engagement (Mondloch, 2018, 9). More to this point, she frames how interfaces, bodies, experiences and sculptural environments are interconnected.⁹⁴ Arguably, in this sense, installations provide a focus point for audiences to interact, activate and investigate human and non-human

relationships. Mondloch states:

Installations are always contingent upon the viewer's embodied and contextualized experience, and they exhibit the entwined relationships between various subjects and material objects—this totally by design (Mondloch, 2018, 11).

Here the emphasis is on contextualized experiences and intertwined relationships. In this sense, much like an installation, entanglements are complex; each new form becomes something else entirely when presented in a space. By this I mean that entanglements allow for the birth of new knowledges, propositions, material forms, and processes to be realized. Barad suggests that entanglements do not exist as individual elements, but as part of a whole; relational (Barad, 2007). In the spirit of these notions, I suggest that feminist collaborative and experimental processes (as a method and methodology) allow for us to consider immersion beyond its aesthetic potential. In turn, by taking up feminist ways of exploring the poetics of form, stories, bodies, agency, other sensorial aspects and new ways of engagement emerge.⁹⁵

Cumulatively, the artworks create multisensory, affective realities, what Mondloch calls “provocative enactment(s) of the interface” alongside new sciences and technologies that redefine our everyday (Mondloch, 2018, 82).^{96 97} I mention this to draw attention to the layered ways technology is used to capture a variety of movements, scores, and performing bodies that exist in multiple dimensions. In particular, I highlight this to point out how personal experiences of the everyday can be viewed through various types of engagement and how the unnoticed details or unseen moments can be witnessed in new ways.⁹⁸ I see this type of interdisciplinary engagement as valuing all of the senses and bodily experiences. This is an integral lens for Feminist Materialist practice because new collaborative methods arise from the exploration of ecological paradigms, decentering the form, and by approaching creative practice with digital and immersive technologies. I argue that the eight interdisciplinary works explore new potent fields of possibility that employ making-thinking-doing

approaches to matter. Take, for instance, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) and *Carrying Others* (2019) both of which use drone technology as surveillance tools and collaborators to extract advantageous vertical and horizontal experiments between body, land, and ecology.

Traces of Motherhood (2016), *Domestic Cupboards* (2017), *Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out, and In-Between* (2017), *Hunting Self* (2018-19) and *Mothering Bacteria* (2019) also demonstrate the use digital cameras, tripods, smartphones and other consumer-grade technologies as capturing tools for indoor and outdoor ground and auditory surveillance. This approach creates a new appreciation of revelatory spectatorship with everyday technology that emphasizes matter and bodies in new meaningful ways (Mondloch, 2018, 6). Argued another way, these works present intersectional perspectives on creative process and production. Much like this document, which supports the liberation of materiality, space, text and aesthetic sensibilities, this artwork by extension demonstrates generative and iterative process, imagery, text, stories, digital ephemera that invite conversation and movement. I see this as a valid form of knowledge making.

In this way, this research highlights how multimodal works can challenge how we experience spatial, temporal environments and scholarship. As Braidotti suggests:

[M]ore conceptual creativity is necessary, and more theoretical courage is needed in order to bring about the leap across inertia, nostalgia, aporia and the other forms of critical stasis induced by our historical condition. It has become like a mantra to me: we need to learn to think differently about the kind of subjects we have already become and the processes of deep-seated transformation we are undergoing. The philosopher in me believes that a new alliance between philosophy, the arts and science is a crucial building block for this qualitative shift of perspective. The writer in me, on the other hand, continues to muse about the complex ways in which the imaginary both

propels and resists in-depth transformations (Braidotti, 2014, 163).

Braidotti suggests that conceptual creativity can transform how alliances are formed, by shifting the divide between creative practice, science and the humanities (Braidotti, 2014, 163). Presented this way, Braidotti argues for thinking outside of established discourse and outside of institutional boundaries, in particular, embracing creative approaches and processes that breathe engagement in new “affective and geometrically rigorous” ways (Braidotti, 2014, 163).

In this spirit, I take up an intermediary and interdisciplinary position that values otherness, fluidity, and improvisational approaches to knowledge formation that embrace feeling, performing bodies, shape, surface, space, light, volume, form, texture, sound, and the everyday.⁹⁹ In particular, I argue that this research makes an important contribution to the environmental

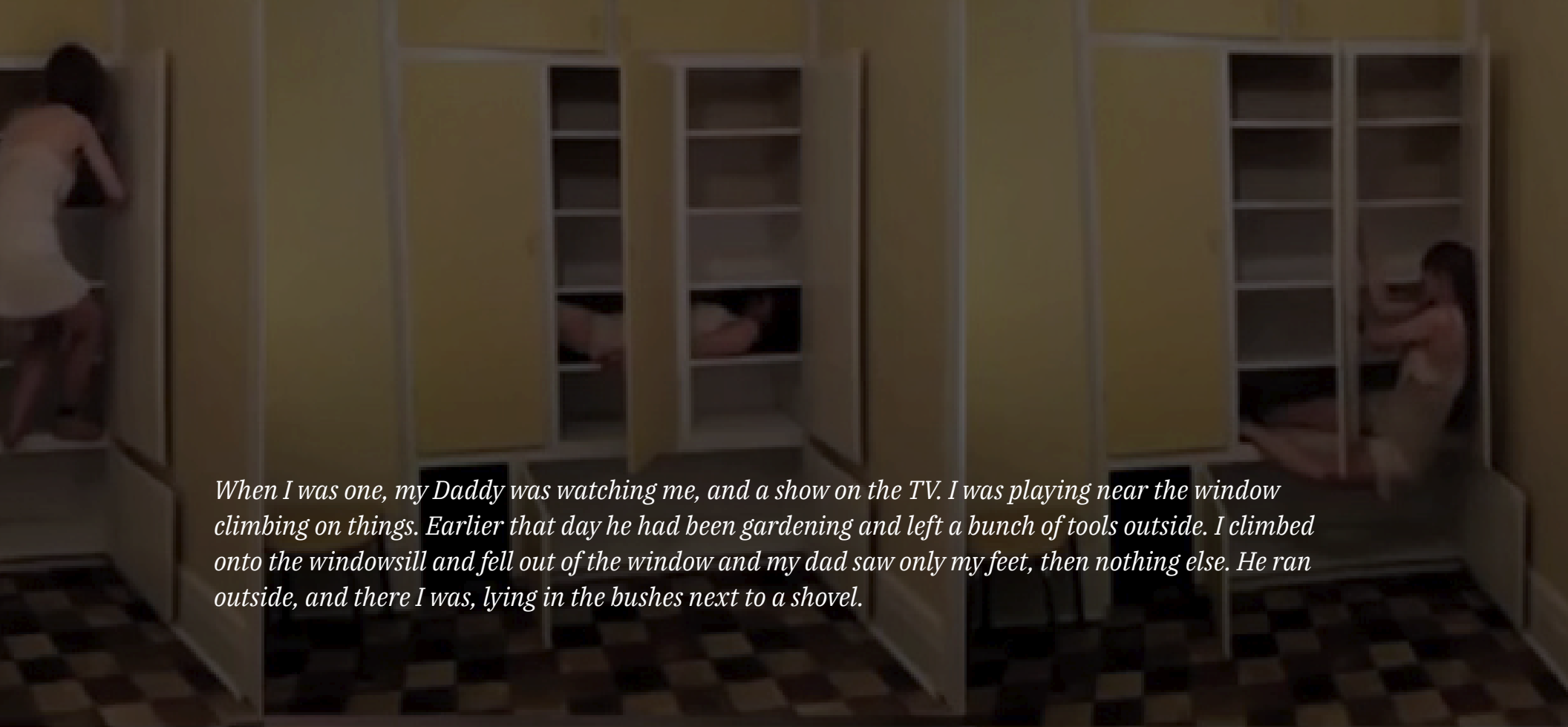
humanities, feminist scholarship and Research-Creation practices by exploring new strategies, subjectivities, frameworks for materiality, and positions of theorization. Much in the sentiment of other feminist philosophers such as Haraway, Braidotti, Truman and Springgay, Mondloch, and Loveless, who for decades have been writing on subjectivity, bodies, technologies, new media and artistic paradigms, this research argues for vitalist and expanded feminist approaches to create, circulate and fold new forms of knowledge, analyses and experimental artistic research into institutional discourse (Haraway, 2016; Braidotti, 2014; Truman and Springgay, 2015; Mondloch, 2018; Loveless, 2020).^{100 101 102}

The next chapter and subsequent Appendix conclude the document and tie together the discussions on Carriance, the fluid possibilities between bodies, technologies, sound, and installation using a Feminist Materialist approach to Research-Creation.



INTERLUDE

*Daddy's Recollection
of My Window Fall*



When I was one, my Daddy was watching me, and a show on the TV. I was playing near the window climbing on things. Earlier that day he had been gardening and left a bunch of tools outside. I climbed onto the windowsill and fell out of the window and my dad saw only my feet, then nothing else. He ran outside, and there I was, lying in the bushes next to a shovel.



CHAPTER 6

Conclusion



Figure 123. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #14, 2020.

IT IS CRUCIAL IN FACT to see to what extent processes of becoming are collective, intersubjective and not individual or isolated: it is always a matter of blocks of becoming (Braidotti, 2014, 173).

The above text reminds us of the importance of collective and collaborative practice and how intersubjective acts propel us into new spaces of becoming (Braidotti, 2014). Much in line with Turner's earlier articulations on collaborative experimentation, the following pages conclude the discussions on Expanded Feminist Materialist approaches to Research-Creation and the fluid possibilities between bodies, technologies, sound, and installation. The last chapter discussed the eight artworks through three lenses: Poetics of Research-Creation, Narrative, and Carriance to demonstrate how vital Expanded Feminist Materialist approaches are to knowledge formation. Specifically, Carriance presents new ways of viewing bodies, forms, objects and interdisciplinary conversation. This is an important contribution because it values, feminist practices and reveals the entanglements of Carriance and Feminist Materialist Research-Creation. This last point is cultivated in what Cynthia Enloe describes as a feminist curiosity that critiques cultural perspectives and frames the importance of feminist thought and is emphasized in the contemporary, digressive and emergent writing styles of Maggie Nelson, Jessie Greengrass, Rebecca Solnit, Sally Rooney, Eley Williams and Patricia Lockwood, to name but a few (Enloe, 2004; Nelson, 2016; Greengrass, 2019; Lockwood, 2018; Rooney, 2019; Williams, 2017).

Now here we are, at a conclusion that, in some ways feels like a beginning. A conclusion in that this is the final main section of this document and a beginning because this research has led me here, to a place of confluence, discovery and inspiration. Toni Morrison calls this zone as the third dimension, in which artists can read and inform their perception by noting the smells, shapes, sounds and colours of the world (Morrison, 2010). This advantageous space feels like a crossroads, a co-emergence, or, a step into

bright light where I call fully, "begin to experience the relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally [and] take a step toward a more ecological consciousness" (Ettinger, 2005; Bennett, 2011).^{103 104}

I want to emphasize the phrases *to begin* and *step toward*, because they both appear to mean similar things, however, I argue that they are radical in their own ways. For instance, the phrase *to begin* implies starting something new or doing something again. *To step toward*, on the other hand, describes an action of moving towards something else, stepping up or bringing new inertia forward into new directions. This document enacts both of these phrases by creating a new type of engagement that builds *on*, and experiments *with*, materials and performs new affective and corporeal responses in hopes of elevating process, form, stories, documentation, conversation, experience, other species, ecological engagements and ethics of care, and queering above everything else.

This research takes up an intermediary, more-than-humanist position that decentres the human form, breathes life into space, and draws attention to our feeling bodies, which perceive and collect information, vibrations, remediate, and respond to technologies and landscapes in new and emergent ways. I have also made a case for the importance of emerging feminist approaches to creative practice and argued for an Expanded Feminist approach to Research-Creation that takes up notions of entanglement, immersion (nearness), consciousness, bodily awareness and various forms of aural, tactile, visual, environmental and technological synthesis.

In doing so, I argue that expanded feminist spaces and approaches to materiality create new types of engagement that: 1) build new forms of speculative, future-focused, relational artwork; 2) validate new types of material engagement that foreground various propositional forms of knowledge formation, data collection and dissemination; 3) engage with materials and technologies in bodily ways by meandering, weaving, and liberating

form and context; and, 4) disrupt contemporary models that do not account for feminist expressions and expanded formulations of materiality.

I also wanted to write something that made sense to others, mirrored aspects of my practice, and shone light on the everyday. On the most basic level, this document validates my process and contributions over the last five years. It values other ways of aesthetic representation, abstraction, structure and reorganization, and ways to represent different modes of thought, form and content. On another level, it offers an expanded framework for feminist production, theorization and dissemination. In this way, this document builds on my flâneuse sensibilities of liberating form and content by intentionally offering new ways of showcasing material that are defiant of preconceived institutional notions.

During the preparation of this document, I worked both independently and collaboratively, mothered, birthed, lost and found comfort in collegial networks, elegiac acts and the landscape, and pioneered research with consumer-grade technologies. I also approached much of this research through a feminist lens that embraces Materialist Research-Creation approaches as a way to bypass convention, liberate, enact or call attention to unlearning strategies, personal narrative and perspectives. Therefore, unlearning strategies align with creative experimentation and creative applications as they value alternative methods, models, paradigms and new, limitless ways of application.

What has arisen from this process has been the transformative experience of pouring my body out for others to witness.¹⁰⁵ What this means, in the long run, is still unknown. However, for now,

I am hopeful that by sharing personal stories and experimentations through a variety of mediums, contexts and modalities, I will be able to continue to liberate convention, offer new perspectives and move conversations forward towards an expanded feminist sensibility.


As my practice continues to develop, I am drawn towards peaceful activism, and socially engaged artmaking which are reflective of our current ecological emergency. This interdisciplinary research is important because it is divergent and unsettles perspectives, which are essential to help society shape and challenge the stories and research formulations that guide us into uncertain futures.

As a point of departure, I now turn my attention to a series of new creative programs and publicly engaged scholarship on the intersections of maternal performance and labour, and on environmental ecosystems, social histories, and feminist stewardship in both the Tidal Flats of the Fraser River Basin and the water passages of the Columbia Basin. The future creative programs consist of the following three projects: 1) *SkyCat* (2021)—sixth solo album; 2) *Intertidal: Feminist Acts of Performance in the Fraser Tidal Flats* (2021) — a five-piece interdisciplinary program; and, 3) *Queering the Dams* (2022)—a multi-channel immersive installation. Much in line with the rest of the research explored throughout this document, each of these future projects employs a Feminist Materialist Research-Creation approach and will use an array of technological apparatus. This research is timely, and navigates new ways of interrogating landscape, body and ecologies from a performative, mothered, and ecofeminist lens.

INTERLUDE

Reflections on Solitude



The background of the image is a dark, blurry photograph of a field. A fence line with several vertical posts is visible in the upper left and middle sections. The overall lighting is very low, creating a moody and somewhat somber atmosphere.

The following document has been written mostly in my bedroom, late at night while everyone in the house has been asleep. I feel at peace when the family goes to bed because I am not continually lulled into domestic acts.

I am free to think, listen, and work at my own pace and time.

I like being alone and relish the silent moments when I can be myself, or fall asleep in the bathtub, and compose music, or write and sit undisturbed, or find more space to breathe and dream a bit more.

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Figure 124. prOphecy sun, Wayfinding Map #15, 2020.

APPENDIX: ARCHIVAL LINKS OF RESEARCH-CREATION

*Traces of Motherhood***Creator/Director**

prOphecy sun

Description

The three films and sound composition are complementary to this dissertation research. The films were presented as a three-channel audio and video installation in two alternative formats: 1) in the group exhibition *Art & Parenthood* (2016) with artists Mark DeLong, Dream the Combine, MF Rattray and Eloise Williams Rattray, and Skeena Reece; 2) in a class exhibition, *Computational Creativity*, at the SFU Surrey Campus in April 2016. This work foregrounds emergent optical and filmic processes, images, infant motion capture data, alongside domestic and maternal perspectives and actions. Each of these orientations enable unique ways of viewing and considering how maternal memories are captured and explored in public and institutional spaces.

Filename

TBA

Domestic Cupboards

Creator/DirectorprOphecy sun

Description

The film is complementary to this dissertation research. The film was shown as a single-channel audio and video artwork in the group exhibition *SHEILA: Women, Art, and Production with art/mamas* at Fazakas Gallery from March 8–31st, 2017. This artwork is an iteration on *Cupboards* (2011), a single-channel artwork that I made in response to navigating a new relationship with Darren Fleet. The piece was made with a smartphone in Vancouver BC.

Filename

TBA

Magical Beast: The Space Within, Out and In-Between

Creator/Director prOphecy sun and Luciana D'Anunção

Description: The film and sound composition are complementary to this dissertation research. The composition is a part of a live movement and sound performance and two-channel audio and video installation, which was shown in the festival, Dance in Vancouver's (DIY@DIV) at Gold Saucer studios on November 17, 2017. The piece explores notions of Carriance and was collectively shaped with co-creators Luciana D'Anunção and Meghan Rosner. The piece was curated by Deanna Peters (Mutable Subject) and co-curated by dance artists Carolina Bergonzoni, Jeanette Kotowich and Kevin Fraser. The DIY@DIV event was co-organized with dance artist Rianne Svelnis and multimedia artist Ahmed Khalil.

Filename TBA

Hunting Self

Creator/DirectorprOphecy sun

Description

The audio file is complementary to the dissertation research. The file is a compressed version of the 15-channel, 60-minute composition which was curated and installed at the Arts Commons from September 3, 2018–Feb 17, 2019. The sound composition explores the expansive ways that sound leaves traces and how these fragments are felt in rural and urban spaces which are then translated through communication systems, bodies and digital space.

Filename

TBA

Mothering Bacteria

Creator/Director

prOphecy sun, Freya Zinovieff and Gabriela Aceves-Sepúlveda

Description

The three films and audio scores are complementary to this dissertation research. The three videos were part of a three-channel audio and video installation and live performance that was shown at gallery@CALIT2 in the 12th conference on Creativity & Cognition/Designing Interactive Systems Exhibition from June 23-26, 2019. This piece was also presented at the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment Biennial Conference, Paradise on Fire, at the University of California, Davis from June 26-30th, 2019. This ongoing collaboration explores the relationships between particular bodies that mother and bacteria; the process of caring for one another; and how acts of care break down the porous boundaries between Self and Other using sound, bacteria, and computational AI tools and performances in real-time.

Filename

TBA

Floating in the In-Between

Creator/Director

prOphecy sun

Description

The film and audio score are complementary to this dissertation research. The two-channel installation and 15-minute live performance were shown at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson BC on May 30-31, 2019. The piece was created in response to Ruth Bieber's play, *To See or Not to See* (2019). The piece was shown in conjunction with Bieber's play in front of a live audience in the gallery atrium.

Filename

TBA

Carrying Others

Creator/Director

prOphecy sun and Reese Muntean

Description

The film and audio are complementary to this dissertation document. The work was installed as a single-channel A/V film work was exhibited in the Thornlea White Gallery for the Theatre and Performance Research Association Conference (TaPRA 2019) at the University of Exeter, UK in September 2020. The piece explores human and non-human, animate and non-animate relationships and relatedness in urban landscapes in Vancouver BC. The artwork shares part of the title of this dissertation and takes up notions of Carriance, which is based on Bracha L. Ettinger's notions on carrying being something we all experience and how this knowledge resonates through bodily memories and experiences. The piece was shown in a group exhibition and presented through monitors and the ambient sound composition reverberated throughout the exhibition space.

Filename

TBA

Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard

Creator/Director

prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet

Description

The seven films included here are complementary to this dissertation document. The films were installed in a 7-channel immersive installation that was shown at Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson, BC from September 6 – 28th, 2019. This exhibition was the creative result of an artist residency at Oxygen Art Centre that took place two weeks leading up to the exhibition. The video footage, sound and field recordings were recorded in various locations in and around Sunshine Bay in Nelson BC in the Columbia Basin region. In particular, this research questions how to negotiate materiality, interact with familial sites of memory and how this perception shapes the sensorial, cinematic output using smartphone, photographic and drone apparatus.

Filename

TBA

ENDNOTES

- 1 In Rebecca Solnit's *The Faraway Nearby*, she writes about the importance of telling stories as an act of remembering. This document before you is a personal memoir, about my own stories, childhood mishaps, reverence, but also an archive of creative projects made over the last five years as an adult. I find much inspiration from stories, memories, and dreams and find them very integral to my artistic process.
- 2 Throughout this dissertation, you will find thirteen interludes. Each chapter begins with an interlude as a way to allude to the themes of the documents. The stories feature childhood memories, maternal and domestic acts, and chance encounters with death and other assorted arrangements.
- 3 Rebecca Solnit's words are a powerful reminder of invisible maternal accomplishments; and, acknowledge domestic production. For example, how many times tasks like packing lunches are done unseen and forgotten after the event. This quote inspires me to consider my own efforts and the passing of time and other family: father, grandmother and miscarried babies.
- 4 On January 17, 2017, my daddy Cherub passed away from a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in Sunshine Bay. His passing has changed how I view time, see my children, and strengthened my relationship with my mother. To this day, I dream about him often, hear his voice, and feel grateful to have spent so many precious moments with him.

In chapter four, I reflect on his passing through the collaborative artwork, *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard*, 2019.

- 5 The term flâneur is derived from the Scandinavian word flana (wander) or flânerie (being watched or watching others) and means a wandering pedestrian. Michel de Certeau posits, flâneurs can roam, re-shape, alter and breathe new life into the everyday by changing trajectories, and bypassing spaces or embracing and liberating them. Or, by "linking acts and footsteps, opening meanings and directions...emptying-out and wearing away [to] become occupied" (De Certeau, 1984, 107-109). Walter Benjamin's flâneur was a lone figure, wandering without any specific philosophical take on things (Benjamin, 1930). In some ways then, the flâneur becomes a performer of sorts, improvising within prescribed structures, actively filling up empty structures or inviting them into become something new.

Many feminist artists such as Sophie Calle, Janet Wolff, Anne Boyer, Doris Lessing, Maggie Nelson, to name but a few, have taken up this term in new, engaging ways that challenge the invisibility of women in public spaces and how they are seen and heard in literature and everyday (Boyer, 2019; Nelson, 2016; Lessing, 2005; Wolff, 1985). Collectively, what I take from these ideas is that space is being refilled, reinvented or liberated by feminist scholars, artists to build new ways of seeing stories, landscapes both real and imagined. Perhaps, the essence here is that feminist discourse can reveal movement through space, place and memory and breathe new life into everyday culture.

- 6 See Lauren Elkin's perspective on how historical writers and activists such as Virginia Wolfe portrayed women in public settings and discussed flâneurs (Elkin, 2018). What I find intriguing are the ways women enact and disrupt domestic acts, move through stories and space in undefined and unexpected ways.
- 7 See Pipilotti Rist, Mariko Mori, Patricia Piccinini, Zoe Leonard, Kira O'Reilly, and Laurie Anderson's performances, installations and media artworks which imbue aspects of what Stacy Alaimo and Susan J Hekman deem a material turn, where bodies, material theories, and the material world are considered, together (Anderson, 1982; O'Reilly, 2018; Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). This approach is important because it highlights a newfound agency to question body, culture, history, and relationships to material and digital environments (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008).
- 8 This document embraces unconventional movement and conversation. It is an accumulation of data collected from various projects. In *Suite Vénitienne* (1980), Sophie Calle describes her pleasure following people, photographing their every movement over months. In line with other Surrealists and conceptual approaches, Calle's work showcases relentless documentation consisting of photographs, dossiers of information and other texts listing moments or encounters, conversations and random movement. Iverson suggests these works portray accumulations of some on the most "apparently boring processes" and busywork (Iverson, 2010, 165). She states: "For months I followed strangers on the street. For the pleasure of following them, not because they particularly interested me...I photographed them without their knowledge, took note of their movements, then finally lost sight of them and forgot them" (Iverson, 2010, 164). Sophie Calle used a variety of strategies and chance methods to make visible systems and things that often bypass predictable conventionality. These ideas are useful to understand how chance can be used as a method, and how artists and interdisciplinary researchers can use these strategies to retrieve, reflect and reveal a certain amount of spontaneity in the world that often gets overlooked or unnoticed.
- 9 See John Heywood's famous comedic morality plays from the 1500's.
- 10 Fraser and Arden's book *The Craft of Piano Playing*, is a guidebook that outlines a spectrum of techniques to improve dexterity and playing skills. Particularly relevant to my research are their ideas on the architectural or skeletal properties of bodies and how awareness of muscular structures can change the sound potentialities (Fraser and Arden, 2003).
- 11 In the book "*All the things I lost in the flood: Essays on Pictures, Language and Code*" performance artist Laurie Anderson discusses how she comes to terms with losing many priceless possessions, objects and electronic equipment in a basement flood in 2012. Her loss is translated, represented and produced through critical, creative and reflexive processes including prose, music notes, stories, essays, collected texts, photographs, journal entries, drawings, and imagery. She describes a list of all the things she lost, as being "just as good as having the real things...maybe even better" (Anderson, 2018, 10). She discusses how she often comes up with a *plan B* when creating as mistakes occur or more often than not, things turn sideways. These *plan B* situations arise in moments such as a flood in her basement, in a live performance, while recording in a studio, or in the act of making anything material etc.
- This work is inspiring because of how she embraces her failures and invents new ways to approach difficult and challenging situations. In particular, Anderson's plan B method aligns with my improvisational methods, whereby, the act of creating becomes more about embracing what happens in the moment, or being fully present in the here and now. Moreover, I am inspired by how

Anderson embraces change and builds remarkable pieces off of her failure and invents new strategies of creating in the moment. Coming to terms with our loss and failure can be an interesting tactic to make new work that opens me up to new perspectives and possibility.

- 12 See Avasilichioaei's unconventional album/book, *Eight Track*, in which she poetically discusses migration, surveillance, hybrid monsters and aural sensibilities (Avasilichioaei, 2019). This work is particularly important to my research because she uses unusual approaches to creative practice and ways to frame research with technologies.
- 13 In the article, *The Memory of the Photograph*, David Bates refers to photographs as fixed and fluid: social and personal (Bate, 2010, 255).
- 14 This research design builds on standard models of visual and sonic autoethnography, intersectional feminist discourse, and autotheory. See endnote number six and chapter two.
- 15 See Bracha L. Ettinger's lecture: "Subject, Trust, Carriance," 2014. Bracha L. Ettinger refers to carriance (carrying) as being innately present in everyone's subconscious because we all have an imprint or memory of being carried by a maternal figure. In this sense, we may not remember the encounter, but may recall a sensory element or resonance from that moment (Ettinger, 2006). She poetically states: "To carry in the body is the most radical and revolutionary act that the human being can accept, to double itself, we have all gone through that so are acquainted with the drama and difficulty" (Ettinger, 2014, Youtube).
- 16 Adrienne Rich's seminal autobiographical book *Of Woman Born*, describes her own experiences being a new mother, the emotional, physical and psychological expectations she encountered and the societal institution of motherhood (Rich, 1995).
- 17 Rich's book is still relevant today with descriptions of the institution of motherhood as not an entirely positive experience. Rich describes mothering as an "exquisite suffering," or a suffering of ambivalence towards herself, society and her children. What I take from Rich's musings is that the relationships forged early on (mothers and daughters) impact future relationships with other women. Further, that we need to support other mothers in every way because gender roles, societal expectations are rampant still today.
- 18 Andrea O'Reilly's book *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's Of Woman Born*, builds on Rich's theoretical concept of the institution of motherhood by examining how patriarchal institutions subjugate, dominate and regulate women's reproductive roles; how women are assigned responsibility for the majority of mothering; and, how patriarchal ideology dictates intensive mothering, what O'Reilly describes as mothers following the values and expectations of the dominant culture (O'Reilly, 2012, 5-7).

- 19 Bracha L. Ettinger proposes a new model for femininity that does not support Freudian theories of the unconscious, whereby male subjects hold power over female subjects. Instead, Ettinger argues for a more balanced, contemporary otherness that breaks accepted and linear models and paradigms. Ettinger defines this as a matrixial space; a feminine and other that are not subject to phallus notions. She further defines this space as the psychic sphere of mothering, which is both trans-subjective and sub-subjective. Ettinger states how, “the matrixial designates ‘woman’ not as the Other but as co-emerging self with m/Other, and link a rather than object a not as lack or a figure of rhythmic scansion of absence/presence but as a borderlinking figure of differentiation in co-emergence. Relations-without-relating and distance-in-proximity preserve the co-emerging Other as both a subject and an object without turning the Other into an object only” (Ettinger, 2006, 218). She defines the term co-emergence as a fusing of difference, offering that this space is not a maternal container. She states: “Before birth, the co-emergence potentiality arises and operates alongside potentialities for a fusing symbiosis. After birth, the co-emergence potentiality arises and evolves alongside potentialities for a fusing symbiosis and rejection” (Ettinger, 2006, 218-19). Further, how the image or representation of the, “womb/matrix is conceived of here not primarily as an organ of receptivity or ‘origin’ but has human potentiality for differentiation-in-co-emergence. Its space is not a maternal ‘container’, its time is not the inaccessible chronological past” (Ettinger, 2006, 218-19). Ettinger states mothering can be a psychic sphere that is both trans-subjective and sub-subjective at the same time. This writing poetically provides a contemporary feminist perspective on terms and definitions that are useful to my research. Her ideas resonate with my practice and make accessible complex contemporary notions and critiques dominant worldviews on notions such as othering, mothering, co-emergence and opposition to notions of the maternal container. These ideas can inform my future work on how mothering can be a place of othering.
- 20 Much of this current research aligns with what Bracha L. Ettinger proposes as a new model for femininity that does not support Freudian theories of the unconscious, whereby male subjects hold power over female subjects. Instead, she argues for a more balanced, contemporary otherness that breaks accepted and linear models and paradigms. Further, the definition of a matrixial space; a feminine and other that are not subject to phallus notions is important. She further defines this space as the psychic sphere of mothering, which is both trans-subjective and sub-subjective. Ettinger states how, “the matrixial designates ‘woman’ not as the *Other* but as co-emerging self with m/Other and link a rather than object a not as lack or a figure of rhythmic scansion of absence/presence but as a borderlinking figure of differentiation in co-emergence. Relations-without-relating and distance-in-proximity preserve the co-emerging *Other* as both a subject and an object without turning the Other into an object only” (Ettinger, 2006, 218). She defines the term co-emergence as a fusing of difference, offering that this space is not a maternal container. She states: “Before birth, the co-emergence potentiality arises and operates alongside potentialities for a fusing symbiosis. After birth, the co-emergence potentiality arises and evolves alongside potentialities for a fusing symbiosis and rejection” (Ettinger, 2006, 218-19). Ettinger proposes further that the image or representation of the, “womb/matrix is conceived of here not primarily as an organ of receptivity or ‘origin’ but as the human potentiality for differentiation-in-co-emergence. Its space is not a maternal ‘container’, its time is not the inaccessible chronological past” (Ettinger, 2006, 218-19). Here, she states mothering can be a psychic sphere that is both trans-subjective and sub-subjective at the same time. The writing poetically provides a contemporary feminist perspective on terms and definitions that are useful to my research. Her ideas resonate with my practice and make accessible complex contemporary notions and critiques dominant worldviews on notions such as othering, mothering, co-emergence and opposition to notions of the maternal container. These ideas can inform my future work on how mothering can be a place of othering.

- 21 I take much inspiration from Solnit’s quote on the importance of moving through grief, as I recently lost my father in 2017. Solnit states: “My survival depended on mapping her landscape and finding my routes out of it. We are all the heroes of our own stories, and one of the arts of perspective is to see yourself small on the stage of another’s story, to see the vast expanse of the world that is not about you, and to see your power, to make your life, to make others, or break them, to tell stories rather than be told by them” (Solnit, 2013). The collaborative project *Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains, Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard* (2019) alludes to the real and imagined memories of my father moving through the fields and orchard situated around the family home. The artwork explores presence in visual, auditory, geographical and psychological ways (see Chapter Four).
- 22 In the anthology, *Material Feminisms*, Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman map together a series of essays from Manuel DeLanda, Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, and Quentin Meillassoux on the new materialism and theoretical developments in the field (Alaimo and Hekman, 2008). Braidotti’s concepts on materiality are particularly useful to consider corporeal and technological systems.
- 23 See Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova’s conceptual map of artistic and theoretical terms that discuss in further detail the posthuman condition, in which human beings are not the center of everything (Braidotti and Hlavajova, 2018).
- 24 New Media refers to the gadgets, devices, and tools people use every day to help them access, organize and communicate information with others (Hansen, 2010, 172).
- 25 I mention Ada Lovelace here because as Sadie Plant writes, Lovelace liberated women from domestic tasks, and is credited as the first computer programmer, a visionary, with an ability to see beyond the object (Plant, 1995). See Babbage’s Analytical Engine.
- 26 Other women that contributed to this list of unrecognized contributors include: Edith Clarke (Electrical engineer), Betty Jean Jennings Bartik (first general-purpose computer programmer), Kathleen McNulty (first general-purpose computer programmer), Mauchly Antonelli (first general-purpose computer programmer), Ruth Lichterman Teitebaum (first general-purpose computer programmer), Frances Bilas Spence (first general-purpose computer programmer), Marlyn Wescoff Meltzer (first general-purpose computer programmer), Frances Snyder Holberton (first general-purpose computer programmer). This list is not extensive, but points to the historical invisibility of women in the tech industry (Dice, web).
- 27 See Kate Craig’s video works, *Skins: Lady Brute Presents her Leopardskin Wardrobe* (1979) and *Still Life: A Moving Portrait* (1976).
- 28 Take, for instance, Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), which builds on Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl’s ideas on power relations (Heidegger, 2013; Husserl, 2011). OOO, articulated by Graham Harman, repositions the relationship between objects and humans, from a relationship of power to one of codependence, coexistence and ontological equality (Harman, 2005; 2017). OOO relates to Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory, where humans combine or associate themselves with subset power relationships (Latour, 2005).
- 29 Timothy Morton’s ideas on Hyperobjects bridge both OOO and New Materialism (Morton, 2010; 2013). According to Morton, Hyperobjects are objects that can exist across distance, and thread in ways that are invisible to human eyes—being so big, so massive that humans cannot comprehend their size, scale, and time-space (Morton, 2013).

- 30 New Materialism focuses on non-human forms, such as animals and other lively organisms.
- 31 Speculative Realism addresses the metaphysical, or a reality beyond what is perceived by human senses. For Bill Brown, materiality is the dimensions both below, and beyond human experience and how they justify what an experience is (Mitchell and Hansen, 2010, 49). For others, a material is commonly accepted as a substance that gets processed into something else entirely (Lange-Berndt, 2015).
- 32 Katherine Behar takes matter in a new direction altogether with Object-Oriented Feminism (OOF), a feminist intervention responding to OOO, New Materialism, and Speculative Realism. OOF takes up objects, things, matter and stuff with a feminist perspective and outlook that can be used by larger assemblages or systems (Behar, 2017, 5).
- 33 In *Primal Rhythm: Seven Light Bay* (2011), Mori creates a large-scale, site-specific installation off a remote bay in Japan. The work consists of two separate sculptures. The first sculpture *Sun Pillar* (2011) perches on top of a remote rock island. The second sculpture *Moon Stone* (2011), floats in the middle of the bay. As the day shifts from day to night, from dawn to dusk, the pillar acts as a sundial to create a shadow across the bay. The stone adjusts to the time change by changing colours throughout the day (Faou Foundation, press release).
- 34 Feminist Media Art is a social movement that emerged in the late 1960s that brought awareness on topics such as women's perspectives on birth or everyday practices and social interactions using various forms of digital media in unique ways.
- 35 Contemporary sound studies have become an important field of research for considering relationships between environment, culture, technology, humans, animals, and other species. This includes a broad range of interdisciplinary research and creative activity in fields such as the environmental humanities, musicology, philosophy, anthropology, architecture, and art.
- 36 I use the phrase "auditory glow" as a way to poetically describe the phenomena of how sound is continually all around us and informs our everyday actions and worldview.
- 37 Truax further notes that Gabor (1947), Xenakis (1971) and Curtis Roads developed earlier prototypes of his model of real-time granular synthesis (Truax, 1988).
- 38 The term Schizophonic mimesis is a combination of two sources: Murray R. Schafer's word, *schizophonic* and Feld's *schizophonic* mimesis (Feld, 1996). Together they are an interesting proposition.
- 39 Psychoacoustic tests are an important contribution to sound studies because they foreground how much sound loitering human devices create and describe new methods of evaluation.
- 40 See Gonalo F. Cardoso and Ruben Pater's *A Study into 21st Century Drone Acoustics*, 2016. The soundtrack is a mix of found and generated sounds and highlights the level of noise pollution from drones in urban spaces.

- 41 According to Sigmund Freud, people have three levels of consciousness: the unconscious, the conscious, and the preconscious (Zepf, 2011). Freud proposes that our unconscious mind is a reservoir of information, dreams, motivations, thoughts, and desires. The conscious state is an active or aware state that can assess or perceive information. The preconscious state is a mix of unconscious thoughts and memories, or an In-Between area (Hamilton, 1998). For Freud, the unconscious mind explains why human beings have a capacity for irrational and unexplained responses or behaviour. In his articulation, the unconscious drives human decisions. The unconscious is revealed through dreams and unexplained or unwanted behaviours. It is this unconscious aspect of our brains, which humans are for the most part unaware of, where there is a constant battle between known and unknown.

Freud also describes dreams as representations of a person's unconscious desires, motivations, thoughts and wish fulfillment. He suggests that their desires find their way into their daily awareness through the dream space—a space of altered consciousness, filled with images, wishes, sounds, and vivid sensations. Made up of impressions from the physical world, these are translated and interpreted in the unconscious realm (Freud, 1995). Freud's systems of transformation are especially relevant for how processes such as condensation and displacement can be directed and provide a powerful tool for exploring the symbolic potential of objects.

- 42 Similarly, to Mary Arnold-Forster, De Saint-Denys wrote dream dairies over 946 nights to understand consciousness (De Saint-Denys, 1982).
- 43 More recently, large format projectors have also served as inspiration to artists such as Schneider-Siemssen and Herbert von Karajan (The Cosmic Space of Gunther Schneider-Seimssen, Website). Large Format Projections have also inspired much of contemporary cinema, in particular, film artists who desire an extremely powerful video output (Suzanne, 1995). Take for instance, Christian Moeller's *Hands* (2009) and Ron Arad's *720 Degrees* (2011), to name but a few.

There is also a rich history of environmental/installation art in public spaces, such as Joseph Beuys' 7000 Oaks (1982), Michael Naimark's Displacements (1980-84), and Jean-Paul Riopelle's La Joute (1969).

- 44 In the 1930s, Walter Benjamin wrote about how mass communication devices such as film and photography could push human understanding and perception of art and objects. Benjamin introduced the concept of the Aura, an authentic or unique work of art that is bound by its past, its social, cultural privilege and technical reception in the world (Benjamin, 2010, 4-5). The Aura is tied to the hand of the artist, which imbues the object with a particular identity and meaning, one that is absent on the production line. He articulates that the aura is something in the past, or at a distance, looking back (Benjamin, 2010, 5-6).

I mention this here because the Aura relates to the image and how we perceive objects and moving imagery. For example, in Benjamin's assessment, this Aura is said to be both lost, and in some sense emancipated, losing its private power, but gaining emancipatory potential. Benjamin states that mechanical reproduction has liberated art: "for the first time in world history, technological reproducibility emancipates the work of art from its parasitic subservience to ritual" (Benjamin, 2010, 6). These ideas suggest how reproduction has changed the idea of the Aura, in particular, a person's inter-subjective relationship, or their perception of a work of art from a cult value—whereby it now becomes worthy of exhibition. In this way, the masses here can be seen as buying into an economy of mass reproduction, and more importantly, they can see themselves reflected in photographs, on screen, and in moving imagery, unconsciously or consciously shaping thoughts, or offering to glimpse unknowns and new terrains (Benjamin, 2010, 10).

- 45 The interactive web documentary *Welcome to Pine Point* (2011) exemplifies these ideas. It is a “liquid book” showcasing a new archival-like database that combines both new memories from the past and images and commentary from a person’s present time. The media forms included are photography, video, film clips, audio interviews, text interviews, past archival interviews and new and refurbished soundtracks (NFB-Welcome to Pine Point, Web).
- 46 This point is further emphasized in John Crawford and Lisa Naugle’s custom designed system, *Active Space*, to both create and further explore telepresence performance. *Active Space* is an intermedia performance environment that incorporates motion-tracking technology with video/audio processing, generative animation, and musical composition. Crawford and Naugle have created many telepresence performances that use Active Space in order to create a shared virtual space between performers in separate locations. For example, video images of performers are overlaid with one another so that performers appear to be partnering with one another in the virtual space (Naugle and Crawford, 2014). Or Sheppard et al., describe a *Tele-Immersive Dance Environment* (TED) that provides many different forms of collaborative options in a telematic environment. For example, a “dance with self” option, allows performers to interact with previous recordings of their own movement. Performers can also change the vantage points of the video and introduce new virtual objects to interact with in the space (Sheppard et al., 2008). Both of these examples demonstrate that presence in telepresence is often facilitated through visual or aural means such as virtual objects, video projection and sound.
- 47 In aviation, the term drone refers to unpiloted aircrafts or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), which are mainly used for military purposes, storm surveillance, 3D mapping or space flight (Howel, 2018).
- 48 Many critics suggest that drone art is passive and devoid of political protest or referencing to its military lineage, showing instead an, “absence of visible opposition within the milieu of cultural production” (Stubblefield, 2020, 2-3). What this implies is that the majority of drone art does not take up political action and remains passive and dismissive. In Stubblefield’s book *Drone Art: The Everywhere War as Medium*, he argues that artists are paving/bypassing through and around this deep historical tapestry and finding new ways of engagement (Stubblefield, 2020).
- 49 See the 12-page booklet: *A Study into 21st Century Drone Acoustics*, 2016. This creative investigation features audio, material and digital strategies to understand the destructive power of drones (A Study into 21st Century Drone Acoustics, Website).
- 50 The *Sensory Festival* invites hackers to make devices that can enhance environmental experience and explores, “ways of creating technologies and practices that focuses and fine-tunes our attention towards sensing varied intensities of change within our environment” (Sensorium Festival 2019, Website).
- 51 See social or corporate surveillance platforms such as Facebook, Google etc.
- 52 See Skybetter’s YouTube lecture, titled *Dark Elegies: Choreographies of Surveillance and National Defense*, 2020.
- 53 See Gonçalo F. Cardoso and Ruben Pater’s ideas of, “interception, interference, and GPS spoofing,” in the *Drone Survival Guide*, 2016.

- 54 In 1896, French meteorologist Léon Teisserenc de Bort launched hundreds of them from his observatory in France, leading to the discovery of the boundary of Earth's atmosphere, the stratosphere and the troposphere (the lowest layer), (Fonton 1-3). The invention of the weather balloon inaugurated the age of remote sensing, providing us with the ability to collect information from previously unattainable sources. Perhaps it is not surprising that Freud and his contemporaries' dream investigations were happening at the same time and echo the ways in which the dream, like the uncharted skies, were part of late nineteenth century scientific landscape. The experimental nature of Teisserenc de Bort's work has inspired much of my own research with the weather balloon over the last seven years.
- 55 The Natural Resource of Canada website's definition of aerial photography is particularly useful in navigating terms and frames the importance of contemporary vertical practices, what Stubblefield posits as a vertical privileging, or, "vertical sovereignty" (Stubblefield, 2020, 72).
- "An aerial photograph, in broad terms, is any photograph taken from the air. Normally, air photos are taken vertically from an aircraft using a highly-accurate camera. There are several things you can look for to determine what makes one photograph different from another of the same area including type of film, scale, and overlap. Other important concepts used in aerial photography are stereoscopic coverage, fiducial marks, focal length, roll and frame numbers, and flight lines and index maps" (The Natural Resource of Canada, website).
- 56 Andrew Tatham describes cartographic units and materials as, "any documents that represent the whole or part of the earth or any celestial body, normally to scale. Included are two and three dimensional maps and plans; aeronautical, navigational, and celestial charts; globes; block diagrams; sections; remote sensing images (e.g., aerial photographs with a cartographic purpose); atlases; and map view" (Tatham, 2018, 5).
- 57 In the 1800s, theorist Jeremy Bentham wrote about institutional systems of control and building a surveillance state (Bentham, 2012). This model has been adopted in various discourse and formulations around the world. Take, for instance, prisons, algorithms, and the development of digital surveillance.
- 58 See Thomas McMullan's writing on the contemporary panopticon and digital surveillance.
- 59 Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst discuss notions of spectacle and performance and how a shift in the way researchers view and interact with mass and private audiences and how they dictate their research practices. They discuss the development of audience, relevant research and current studies of audiences and their behavior. They propose three types of audiences: diffused, mass and simple (Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, 1998).
- 60 It is important to note that my brother survived the drowning and many years later, my brother would be doing the same motion, mouth to mouth, to try and revive my daddy when he had a cardiac arrest in the kitchen in Sunshine Bay.
- 61 See Alise Tifentale's 'The Selfie: More and Less than a Self-Portrait,' 2018. Alise argues that selfies are both a photographic object and a practice (Tifentale, 2018). Now, arguably, the self-sphere is complicated, however, autoethnographic approaches are important because they highlight how movement and social interactions can reveal much about our everyday that otherwise would be unseen or invisible.

- 62 I take much from Ettinger's thoughts on trans-subjectivity and how important it is to acknowledge emergence. What she calls "metamorphoses," or the act of collaboration in process (Ettinger, 2005). Before I had children, I was making, collaborating and mothering in other capacities—carrying and being carried by others. I believe that this is the heart of intersectional feminist practice, which disrupts patriarchy and takes up multiple perspectives, voices, and nurtures meaningful relationships. During pregnancy, I was making; whilst birthing I was making; and, after I gave birth, I continue making, collaborating, mothering and laboring—but now, I feel like I work against time, societal expectations, and often out of necessity my children are in hand on shoots and at performances. In this and in other ways, I feel a different kind of pressure now that I am a mother because I am responsible for the wellbeing, life, and environment my children are surrounded by, and it is up to me to create, map and chart new boundaries and stories.
- 63 See SSHRC Website definition at <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx>
- 64 See Lena Šimic and Emily Underwood-Lee's "Manifesto for Maternal Performance (Art) 2016!" in which they write a manifesto that pays tribute to performance artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles's 1969 Manifesto on maintenance acts. The art/mamas collective is using similar framing for an upcoming 2021 Plot residency at Access Gallery. This writing gives space for messiness, acknowledges female history, domestic realities and opens up space for conversations on equality and feminist voice.
- 65 In Stephen Johnson's book *The Everyday*, he suggests that artists use the everyday to position or bring things into focus that are overlooked, or in, "the realm of the unnoticed" (Johnson, 2008, 15). Or, how artwork uses the everyday as a type of immersion with a style of creating art with everyday objects, materials, thoughts, patterns, resources; meditating on what happens when nothing happens kind of conceptual framework. This provides a useful way to view and conceptually frame my research that stems from everyday investigations and uses everyday objects and proposes possibilities of working that are irregular and feel chanceful. Specifically, the work is a celebration of the everyday, chance and the accidental possibilities of making from nothing and showcases in *Domestic Cupboards* (2017) and *Cupboards* (2010).
- 66 See Agnès Varda's short 7-minute film *Women's Response: Our Body, Our Sex* (1975). In the film a variety of women discuss personal perspectives of being in a woman's body.
- 67 In the 1960s, dance icon Yvonne Rainer changed the face of dance in front of a camera, embodying stripped down choreography. Rainer is influential to my practice because of the ways she experiences and liberates the body and motion in front of a camera. Her work highlights the body more as the, "source of an infinite variety of movements than as the purveyor of emotion or drama" (Carrie Lambert-Beatty, 2008, 10). Yvonne Rainer's work focused on liberating the performer, bringing their feelings and movement essence to the piece. Ultimately, the dancer's eccentricities were appreciated, not discouraged. Elements such as repetition, games, tasks, and patterning, eventually became standard features of contemporary dance. In her video performance of a choreographic score, *Trio A*, Rainer employed new strategies in her dance making. For example, she made all movement direct, functional and task driven, and devoid of stylization. *Trio A* inspires me to consider that space where the mind becomes just another muscle in the body, and the focus becomes the objective presence of the body as an object and its movement.

- 68 See Cindy Sherman's "Performing for the Camera" exhibition at the Tate Modern, 2016.
- 69 See Hannah Wilke's photographic triptych *Gestures* (1976), which showcases stills from a videotaped performance (Hannah Wilke, Website).
- 70 David Bates in the article *The Memory of Photography* suggests that images mean different things for each person. For example, they could be *auditifs* (through sounds) or *moteurs* (gestures and actions) rather than as visuals (through images) (Bates, 2011). He further posits that photographs are in a sense an artificial aid to provoke aspects of a memory.
- 71 While in this current project I am not using the accelerometer or GPS, I do take advantage of the expansive nature of the smartphone, through its ability to immediately edit and upload content and its intrinsic affinity to serendipity.
- 72 In my practice, the iPhone is a tool with which to record improvisations and sound elements that might be incorporated into future installations. This technology has GPS that can record the latitude and longitude of all of the user's movements and coordinates. Its ability to communicate with cellphone towers and satellites makes it an object that can cross physical and spatial boundaries belying its disarmingly small size. Being small, it can go everywhere, which means its presence is expansive. As Timothy Morton writes in *Ecology Without Nature*, objects can exist across distance, being so massive that they refute time and space (Morton, 2009, 10-18). The concepts of omnipresence and surveillance take on a new importance here as I record myself in personal and public domains.
- 73 Aili Bresnahan outlines the term improvisation as unplanned, free guided and spontaneous. Bresnahan proposes how artists working with improvisational techniques influence artists working in other mediums who then re-enact and respond in new experimental ways. Bresnahan states how improvisation is not an, "ad hoc activity; rather, it involves skill, training, planning, limitations, and forethought" (Bresnahan, 2015, 574). Improvisation combined with smartphone technology are an important techniques and tools used in my practice.
- 74 To make the piece, I explored various improvised movement techniques such as RSVP Cycles and Rasa Boxes (Ross, 2007). Ana Halprin designed RSVP Cycles to experiment with ritual experiences, the everyday, including psychological, physical, community, and personal experiences. What is interesting about this system is the use of creative methodologies for collaboration. For example, the four components for the methodology include resources (time, physical materials, other people, ideas, limitations etc.), score (instructions for the work), valuation (dynamically responding to work based on values), and finally performance (creating the work). Her teachings, tactile investigations and physical systems of incorporating the ordinary into the creative process have offered profound inspiration for modern dance styles and for my own research.
- 75 In the 1990s, performance theorist Richard Schechner developed Rasaboxes. Rasaboxes are a physical exploration process that builds a range of feelings clustered around the emotional core using materials influenced by personal and/or historical events to immerse oneself in that experience, feel the emotions of the experience, and prototype the experience. For example, each participant will try eight different emotional and physical versions of the same experience and repetitively prototype the different versions (Rasaboxes, Website). In my own process, I use aspects of these exercises to understand a landscape and my experiences moving through that space.

- 76 See Andrea Francke and Kim Dillon's *Unwritten Handbook: Invisible Spaces of Parenting* (2010-ongoing).
- 77 Lefebvre's ideas on embodiment and lived realms of spatiality remind me of contemporary memory discourse and how cultural history, experiences, perception and relationships with a place or site (Lefebvre, 1991). Interestingly, some define memory according to their particular ways of understanding memory and its relation to various articulations on the body, history, and technology. These ideas can be categorized into Individual, Collective/Globital, and Echoic (Sonic) Memory (Neisser, 2014). Each of these ideas tends to exist on a spectrum of cognitive, political and philosophical belief systems that augment in some way with events or technological systems. Sound can also trigger memories. These ideas are the premise of Echoic Memory, coined by Ulric Neisser, to describe the sensory register in a person's brain that is responsible for processing acoustic information (Neisser, 2014, 189-190). In this sense, when auditory and visual information is collected, processed, assimilated, and then reconsidered—a memory is born.
- 78 I recorded live sound from various locations in one take using my voice, smartphone technology and other electronic amplification and edited in post. Much like my other art projects, smartphone technology is an important tool that provides access to a variety of apps that capture field recordings and improvisational representations. For example, how the voice moves and blends with environmental sounds. In this way, the process and practice are in many ways a logical extension of these emerging technologies. The sound quality reflects the desired immediateness of the performance and also evokes a dream-like aesthetic through its unique properties. What is unique about this creative output, however, is the magnitude of scope of process to record, compose, edit, produce and install a 15-channel sound piece within a year. I created the 15-channel composition first by importing the WAV or MP3 files into Audacity — an open source sound-editing program. I then isolated the base tracks that set the tone of the piece. I then arranged each track in the composition, adjusted the placement, length and volume. Once the structure and alignment were correct, I then adjusted the gain and spatial position of each track by adjusting the left and right meter. Further, I then duplicated a selection of mono tracks and changed them into stereo form. After repeatedly listening over the composition, I selected parts to granulate or stretch the time code. I then added delay and reverb to the overall composition and adjusted the placement of certain sounds such as birds, wind, or human breath. The final composition was listened to again from beginning to the end. Once satisfied, the 15 tracks were individually exported and sent for mastering with Joshua Stevenson at Otic Sound. The mastering process was hands-on and involved equalizing the main level of each track and optimizing the playback mix for entire composition so that it was ready for the Arts Commons sound rig (see Fig. 60-61).
- 79 The spatialized speakers used for this exhibition gave the listeners an opportunity to experience a deeper sound quality, because as the sound travels, it gives an impression of being in a three-dimensional environment. Generally, I have noticed that stereo speakers used in exhibitions only employ the use of the horizontal axis.
- 80 See Bracha L. Ettinger's lecture: "Subject, Trust, Carriance," 2014. Bracha L. Ettinger refers to carriance (carrying) as being innately present in everyone's subconscious because we all have an imprint or memory of being carried by a maternal figure. In this sense, we may not remember the encounter, but may recall a sensory element or resonance from that moment (Ettinger, 2006). She poetically states: "To carry in the body is the most radical and revolutionary act that the human being can accept, to double itself, we have all gone through that so are acquainted with the drama and difficulty" (Ettinger, 2014, Youtube).

- 81 Contemporary author Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* depicts this idea as the text falls outside of regular form. By this I mean that there is no "horizontal discourse" with no apparent story arc, which is to say there is no beginning, middle or end (Nelson, 2016; Gilmore, 1991). This document draws inspiration from Nelson's ideas and contributes to an emerging body of research that tries on new creative approaches and irregular forms of knowledge dissemination.
- 82 See Roland Barthes seminal ideas writing and the horizontal form (Barthes, 1977).
- 83 Philosophers Deleuze and Guatari describe this connection as rhizomes. Rhizomes can be anything connecting, extending in all directions, with multiple exist points. For example, a rhizome could be a collection of plants, or a pack of animals (Deleuze and Guatari, 1987).
- 84 Doreen Massey's *A Global Sense of Place* (1991) describes how the world is becoming a network of globalization and speeding up with no global sense of place. She also describes place as a constellation of social relations. Massey argues that humans are experiencing time-space compressions that create a sense of displacement because of our colonized world. She defines time-space compression as a stretching of communication and movement across geographical space and how our experience of social relations, development and capitalism come together (Massey, 2015). Massey's notions on place as a constellation of social relations are intriguing and align with much of what we made for the installation.
- 85 See Aristotle's *Poetics* section one, which discusses the role of plot (events), and the formulation of the story or narrative arc.
- 86 Seán Street suggests that sonic poetics provide insight about our relationships to space and how we experience, feel and hear through external and internal expressions (Street, 2017).
- 87 See Endnote #21, in which I quote Solnit's perspective on the importance of stories.
- 88 Not to complicate this idea of Carriance, but it is important to note that performing bodies also exist in multiple personal, social and environmental dimensions together, at the same time and beyond (Heeter, 1992). According to Carrie Heeter there are three dimensions of subjective experience: personal, social and environmental (Heeter, 1992). Heeter's framework suggests that presence is felt, experienced and cultivated by practice. Social: refers to how humans or objects interact and react to one another in the world (Heeter, 1992). This suggests that bodies innately have knowledge that they are being watched or seen by others. While, social presence can be enhanced by having meaningful conversations or interactions with others and these interactions convince and provide one with a sense of real presence.
- 89 I take up Elwes notions and outline how complex installations are sometimes including architectural space, lighting, seating, performers, static or moving imagery, alongside either hidden or enhanced technical equipment such as wires, screens, speakers and monitors (Elwes, 2015). This also builds on what Caroline Jones describes as the senses, "both constitute[ing] our 'sense' of unmediated knowledge and [becoming] the first medium with which consciousness must contend" (Jones, 2010, 88).

- 90 Each of the artworks present a variety of approaches to Research-Creation that address topical and personal concerns, and test, trace and build on Blake E. Smith's concept of photographs being afterimages. After images present or outline events that have already happened and provide insight on how a work is produced or installed. In particular, how much material was involved in the process of making it and how many days were needed to collect and sort the material through the lens of the landscape (Smith, 2018).

These notions also imply that contemporary audiences are media saturated, complex, and possess a heightened sense of self-reflexivity that oscillates between medias and circumstances. Their ideas on how to address, consider and test an audience with new material are useful, as every person will respond differently to various technologies, layouts, environments, and mediate between both, depending on their level of engagement.

- 91 Moving images are after images, memory traces, relics, archives, or documents of a performative event, where a window was tagged by a railroad employee. Bates suggests that photographs offer space locations for events that have already happened and how these sites of memory (whether digital or analogue) "offer not a view on history but, as mnemonic devices, are perceptual phenomena upon which a historical representation may be constructed" (Bates, 2011, 262). In other ways, these images stand alone, because they are surreal and blur the space between words and bodies, between image and text, between reality and fiction.
- 92 This reminds me of Susan Kozel's notions on technology as actants that enable bodies to project their materiality further and into something new (Kozel, 2007). Here, the body, the space between the text, and the image exist as a new type of temporality and become something else where the body continually navigates and engages with digital technologies—between audience and performer, performer and space (Halberstam, 2005; Kozel, 2007).
- 93 Sarah Sze articulated this as bodies being interspersed in social presence, time and the frantic rate at which we consume media and other technologies through other forms (Document, 2019).
- 94 These ideas are further expressed in Zoe Leonard's practice, which incorporates experimental analogue, photographic and digital processes to create works that question how people observe the passing of time, collect memory, reality and contend with the unconscious mind. For example, in *945 Madison Avenue* (2014), Leonard creates a large-scale, site-specific installation using a camera obscura technique and a window from the fourth floor of the Whitney Museum. Leonard transforms a large room, walls and ceiling space of the gallery with inverted urban scenes from outside of the gallery of Madison Avenue. The imagery captures time passing, mirroring what people can and cannot see. The piece redefines how audiences view large-scale works, eliciting them to consider how they see, how they look, how they perceive and comprehend reality and the dimensions of time and space with themselves or others.
- 95 This is another example of a paradigm shift, between interface and consciousness—human and machine (Thacker, 2001).

- 96 It is important to note that the linkages between technology and body are beyond mechanical. For example, as Eugene Thacker suggests, bodies have been pushed to the limit countless times over the millennia (Thacker, 2004). In addition, more than ever, we are becoming more than just our bodies, and our increasing awareness and acceptance of our flesh is translating into emergent simulations and other potential forms (Clough, 2010; Fleming, 2014). Patricia Clough further argues that new media insists on the divergence between the human body and human machine, between bodily acts and digitization (Clough, 2010). However, this is problematic because feeling bodies are more than just bodies, they are a part of systems, assemblages, capable of translation, interaction and sentience. However, what this does suggest is that contemporary culture continually negotiates and demands that bodies accept the perceptual shifts offered to them through a myriad of remediating electronic media devices. Therefore, with the aid of technologies, bodies experience a double awareness effect, whereby installations or other types of hyper-mediated spaces, like theatres or VR spaces, ask for audiences to suspend their belief and entertain two realities at the same time, simultaneously.
- 97 See Christa Sommelier and Laurent Mignonneau's *The Interactive Plant Growing* (2019). This artwork embraces various forms of interactivity and sensory engagement between artificial plants, bodies, vegetable and other biological forms. Importantly, they consider how we experience the everyday in activities that cross-liminal space, between nature, sound, and science and technology experience and through generative blends between vegetal and device-related systems where plants can trigger image-generating impulses to computer screens. The work also plays with sound, exploring its embodied, affective qualities and materiality.
- 98 Judith Halberstam writes about queer time and space as frameworks in opposition to conventional notions of time that free cultural inheritance. Arguably, queerness becomes an imaginative strange temporality and discovery (Halberstam, 2005, 2). Similarly,
- 99 Margaret Iverson outlines how creatives throughout the century have used random possibilities, outcome vs. intention, random nature and chance strategies and methods to procure new knowledge and artwork. Further, how chance possibilities have been useful for many artists such as André Breton, Francis Alÿs, William Anastasi, George Brecht, John Cage, Sophie Calle, Stan Douglas, Marcel Duchamp, Brian Eno, Bruce Nauman, Yoko Ono, Gilles Deleuze, and Anna Dezeuze, to name but a few (Iverson, 2010).
- 100 Mondloch outlines the importance of feminist contributions stating how women are "at the forefront of rejecting dualistic separations of minds from bodies or nature from culture and insisting (a la Foucault) on the materializing force of broadly circulating ideas" (Mondloch, 2018, 8).
- 101 This quote acknowledges the rich legacy of feminist theories around subjectivity, bodies, technologies and new media (Mondloch, 2018, 8). As I mentioned in earlier in the document, theorists such as Sara Ahmed, Alaimo, Barad, Ettinger, Haraway and Braidotti, to name a few, have inspired a multiplicity of conversations on materiality by making feminist contributions to the humanities, literature, philosophy and new media production (Ahmed, 2000; Alaimo, 2008; Barad, 2007; Ettinger, 2006; Hekman, 2010; Haraway, 2014; Braidotti, 2006).

- 102 While other lesser known artists such as Amanda Thomson, Chelsea McMullan, Ariel Kirk-Gushowaty and Sophy Romvari take up similar notions on the ecologies of place and work at the periphery of the avant-garde and landscape, technology and installation. Indeed, all of these examples contribute to a growing list of feminist artists and creatives that incorporate into their work hyper-mediated, queer, feminist materialist and decentered perspectives on subjectivity, time and corporeity—exploring identity, narratives of escape and transcendence (Mauzerall, 91). What is key here is that all of these thinkers consider materiality, bodies, non-human and human as intertwined and interacting on and through multiple forms of engagement.
- 103 Here Ettinger’s text describes the process of art making as a co-emergence where things coming into being. I see much potential in this phrase and take up aspects of this in my research process (Ettinger, 2005).
- 104 In Jane Bennett’s lecture at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, she describes her two-year exploration of “thingness” and how it relates to our material world. In particular, how other ecological systems shift our perception and remind us about our disembodied existences when using virtual realities and other social sites (Bennett, 2011).
- 105 I am taking up this phrase from Pipilotti Rist’s installation *Pour Your Body Out* (2008). This artwork asks audiences to experience and stretch their perception of themselves in a large space.

*Back Cover: Figure 125.
prOphecy sun and Darren Fleet, Nostalgic Geography: Mama and Papa have Trains,
Orchards and Mountains in their Backyard, 2019. Process shot.*

