


Fall 2023

Resonance of The Unseen

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Bard College

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Resonance of The Unseen

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
Thuy-Dung (Julius) Nguyen

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
December 2023

Dedication

To my family for never stopping me from doing things they don't understand, raising me to figure things out, and loving me so much.

To Bi for believing in me when I don't.

To myself for working hard to be happy.

Acknowledgments

A heartfelt thank you to Daniella Dooling, whose gentle teaching and relentless support have been instrumental in shaping my artistic journey. Words cannot express how grateful I am to meet her and have her as my Senior Project Advisor.

This exhibition would not have been possible without the help of Roman M. Hrab, Kornelis Poort, Lauren Anderson, John DiMarco, Thomas Mark, Matthew Sargent, Erin Dougherty, Marko Shuhan, Theresa Law, and Sven Anderson.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Sebastian Dziallas, Julianne Swartz, and Lothar Osterburg. Their beliefs in me have been crucial in keeping my spirits high and motivating me to explore a new field.

Lastly, I would be remiss in not mentioning the volunteers who lent me their noses, memories, and footsteps.

I am eternally grateful to everyone who showed me kindness and helped me through this chapter of my life.

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Abstract

in the moment

playful

in memory of

learning

altogether

Artist Statement

Thuy-Dung (Julius) Nguyen's exhibition, 'Resonance of the Unseen,' confronts the sensory saturation of contemporary life by elevating the unobserved aspects of perception. Through sound, scent, and touch, this immersive installation encourages a rediscovery of the elemental experiences of life. The show illuminates the concept of absence, not only as something lacking but as an integral part of the sensory narrative, inviting a deeper resonance with the world.

The auditory section features an interactive installation that simplifies life's rhythms into identifiable sounds from 20 speakers, each representing a thread in the tapestry of life sounds, from nature, humanity, and our surroundings. This sonic puzzle challenges visitors to pinpoint the sounds, emphasizing the importance of mindful presence. This auditory odyssey transcends mere listening; it is a vehicle for memory, a shared experience that connects the individual to the universal. Nguyen's work invites an introspective playful journey, prompting a celebration of the unseen yet deeply felt resonances.

In the scent section, Nguyen showcases a wall of 3D-printed nose tiles, each cast from real individuals. As visitors are invited to touch these nose sculptures, they connect with

the personal stories behind each, reflecting on how beauty and identity are perceived in society. The exhibit features descriptive scent notes that lead visitors to use their imagination and memory to conjure fragrances. This tactile and imaginative engagement highlights the exhibition's focus on the sensory experiences that resonate deeply within us.

In the tactile section, the artist presents a large fired clay slab imprinted with people's footsteps, symbolizing the enduring impact of transient moments. This piece, now a permanent record of ephemeral existence, is paired with a video projection, enhancing its role as a visual metaphor for the lasting effects of our brief presence. Drawing inspiration from the ephemeral patterns left on rain-washed dirt roads in the artist's homeland, this installation is Nguyen's attempt to capture the uncapturable - to render the impermanent permanent. These transient marks on the road, disappearing as they dry, echo the evanescence of human interaction. The artist's work aims to encapsulate these fleeting moments, offering a space for contemplation of the beauty and poignancy of our temporary existence.

'Resonance of the Unseen' serves as a sensory homage and a reminder of life's fleeting nature. Nguyen's work, centered on the physical and the missing, provokes discovery and familiarity in observers. It's an open invitation to engage in a profound dialogue with the senses, to pause, to resonate with the act of sensing, and to find solace in the simple but profound aspects of being.

Artworks Documentation

RESONANCE OF THE UNSEEN

December 2-16, 2023 | Fisher Studio Arts | Dung Nguyen

In 'Resonance of the Unseen,' Thuy-Dung (Julius) Nguyen invites visitors on a sensory journey beyond the ordinary, uncovering the subtle yet profound aspects of perception that often go unnoticed. This exhibition dives into the realms of sound, scent, and touch, revealing the unseen but powerful forces that shape our experiences. Engage in the auditory adventure of 'Sonic Exploration,' uncover the depths of identity and beauty in 'Scented Narratives,' and witness the transient yet enduring influence of human presence in the video projection 'Can I Step On It?' Each element of the show, including the tactile experience of 'Clay Echoes,' interlaces to form a narrative of unseen connections that bind us. Nguyen's work is a lyrical tribute to the senses, inviting a deeper resonance and connection with the world around us.

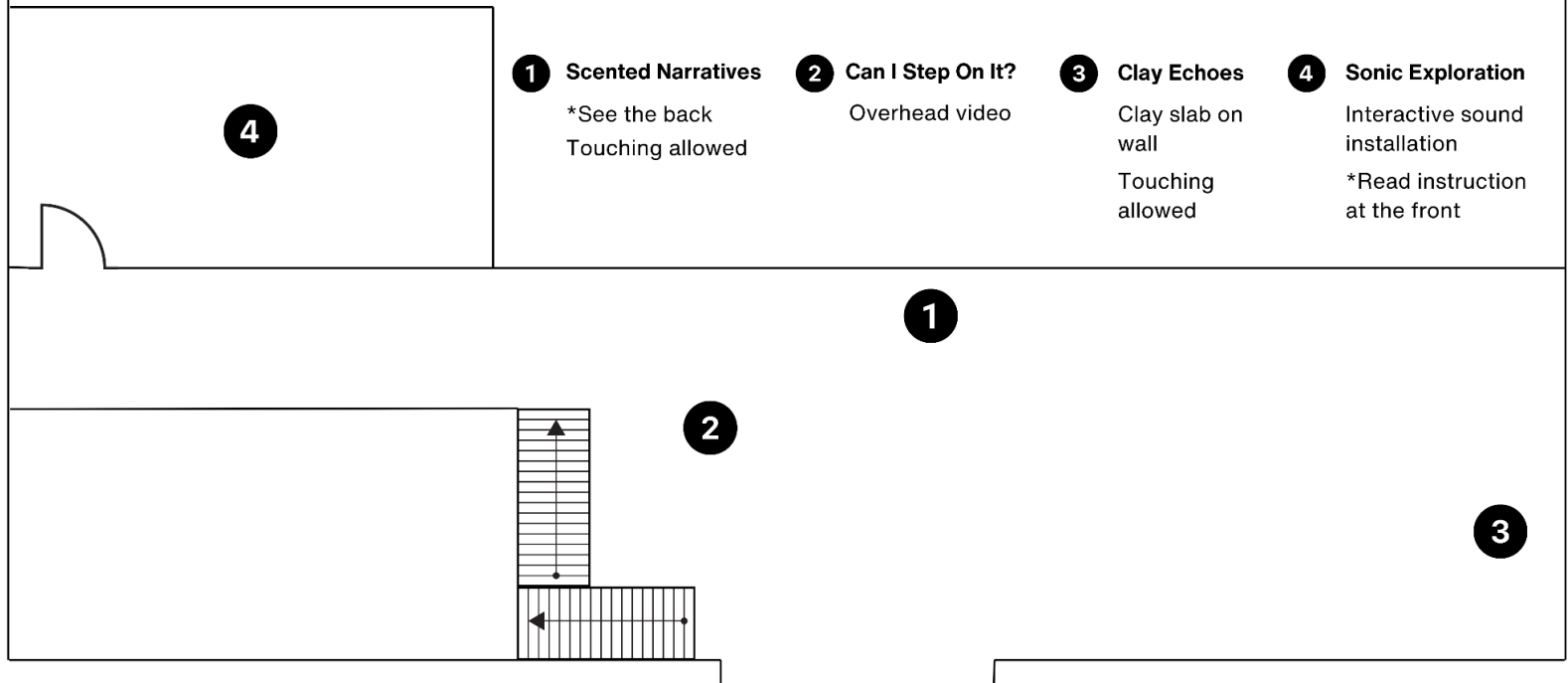



Image 1. Exhibition map; The front of the handout

Scented Narratives

Imagining the smell, reflecting on identity and beauty as you follow the score below

Number from left to right, top to bottom

1	Spicy wood floorboards	18	Coconut	35	Misty bog	51	Barbasol
2	Pine trees in a wet forest. Reminds me of home.	19	Lavender ! Or pine sol	36	Vanille Eau de Toilette Perfume, has some to bring	52	The Ocean
4	Vanilla!	20	thierry mugler's angel +/- or wet leaves	37	My mom's perfume! She's worn the same one since I was seven - it technically smells like vanilla and berries, but I'm always just reminded of a warm hug.	56	Sharp air and dried blood
5	Fish sauce	21	Pine	38	Pan Sobao de Manchego	57	Incense and dog
7	It changes easily with the seasons.	22	Cinnamon, potpourri, searching for cinnamon perfume	40	Strawberry	58	Aroma of the first Orange blossoms
9	Lavender	24	The Smell of Cocoa Butter Vaseline	42	the smell of the earth right before it rains	Get your custom Nose Tile to support Fund For Visual Learning (FVL) 	
10	balsam pine	27	Floral	43	The smell of holi. It's a Hindu festival celebrating colors, love, and spring. I like the smell of the powder we use to go around putting colors on people wearing white.		
12	Casmir for Women Eau de Parfum	29	The smell before the rain or snow	45	Garlic and onions sauteed in butter.		
13	Warm, sweet, and earthy	30	The ocean	48	Chlorine, like pool water.		
14	Cinnamon Broom	31	Magnolia/ vetiver	50	Best friend's particular smell		
16	New shoe smell	32	Printer's Ink				
		34	Garlic and Oil				



Follow the artist Instagram! | @thuydung.nguyenn



Leave a note to the artist.

Image 2. Score Sheet for the Scents; Back of the Handout

Material: HATCHBOX Transparent White PLA

Method: Scanning noses using the Polycam app, converting them to .stl files, modeling them into nose tiles in Blender, 3D printing on a MakerBot Replicator+, and installing with Velcro.

Number of nose tiles: 58

Dimension of each nose tile: 160 x 70 x 10 mm (6.30 x 2.76 x 0.39 inches)

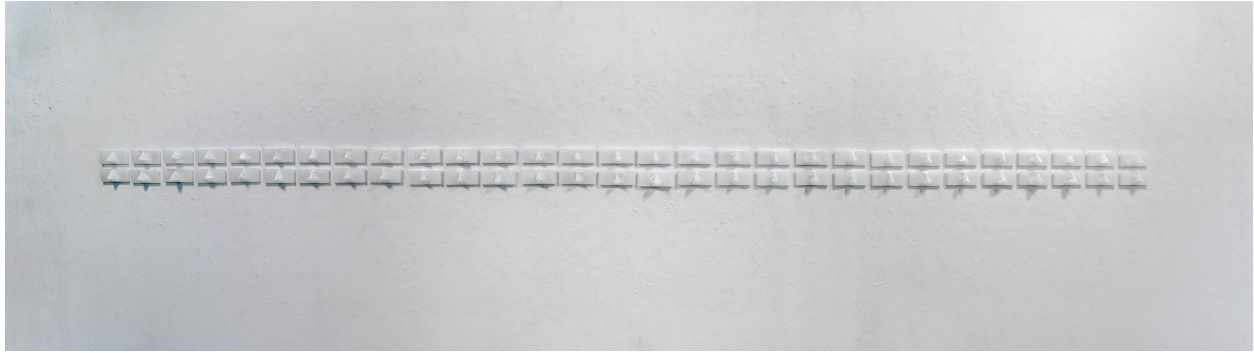


Image 3. Full Scented Narratives



Image 4. Side Scented Narratives

Can I Step On It?

Method: 200-inch video projection on the ceiling

Duration: 54 minutes

Video link: youtu.be/EGPh8U8MhGE



Image 5. Can I Step On It? Ceiling

Clay Echoes

Material: 200 pounds of clay, reclaimed by the artist

Method: Ten 17 x 24 x 1.5 inch clay slabs placed next to each other to create a large clay canvas. Positioned in front of the Campus Center to allow people to walk, run, dance, and ride on it, leaving their imprints. The slabs were then bisque-fired and installed.



Image 6. Clay Echoes Close-up 1



Image 7. Clay Echoes Close-up 2



Image 8. Clay Echoes Close-up 3



Image 8. Clay Echoes Full

Sonic Exploration

Dimension: The installation is housed in a 9.84 x 16.4 feet (width x length) room.

Material/Equipment: 20 90-degree elbows, 20 flanges, 20 small LED buttons, 2 large LED buttons, 2 10-channel amplifiers, 2 12-channel audio interfaces, Arduino Mega 2560, Screw Terminal Block Breakout Shield Module for Arduino Mega 2560, and 20 small speakers.

Method: The Arduino is used to receive signals from buttons, control LEDs, and send serial communication to MaxMSP; MaxMSP controls the sounds and speakers.

More detailed documentation and code: github.com/julxng/Sonic-Exploration

Video link: youtu.be/HjSyqFIPndg



Image 10. Sonic Exploration Instruction



Image 11. Sonic Exploration Pressing Start Button



Image 12, 13. Sonic Exploration Full

Conclusion

I learned many new skills and had so much fun before, during, and after the exhibition.

In future works, I aim to delve deeper into the intersection of art and technology, particularly during this exciting era of AI, to playfully evoke alien emotions.

Appendices

Exhibition Invitation



Media







