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Strings of Sound and Sense: Towards a Feminine Sonic

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in Visual Arts

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Strings of Sound and Sense: Towards a Feminine Sonic

Abstract

This dissertation listens to sound and sound art as sense, sensation, and sonic materiality. We make sense of the world from experience. The sense we make from sound is a subjective and intersubjective engagement with the sensoriality, audibility, and inaudibility of sound and its fluctuation. How we listen has potential to affect our relations with each other: how we hear these relations informs our understanding of the world. The question driving this research is how listening to others and their differences affects how we might hear others and the world differently. The potential for listening and hearing difference in the world is social transformation. This research-creation brings together sonic materiality as fluctuating forces of energy matter, the relationality of sound and space and listening, and the sonic becomings of sound art practices as a speculative proposition for a feminine sonic with an emphasis on sound artworks by Canadian women sound artists. The feminine sonic highlights the relational and embodied interconnectivity of material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal, and subjective and intersubjective dimensions of sound art as unfolding relations of sound and space, sounding bodies, and sonic fluctuation. Sound artworks by women sound artists are presented as phenomenal case studies supported by the philosophy of sonic materiality, sound art, and feminist new materialism, the methodology of phenomenology and feminist phenomenology, and listening practices. Featured sound artworks employ diverse production methods, modes of interaction, and positionalities that affirm heterogeneity, diversity, and difference. Listening to and hearing to these sound artworks confirms the sonic experience as relations of sound and space, the capacity of small sounds to sound the differences of others, and the social activism of listening practices. The interconnectivity of sensorial, inter-subjective, and cognitive ways of knowing affirms the interrelations of humans and others in the world and the potential of sound art for social change. Artworks created during the doctoral program are inserted between chapters of the written document as interstices, with supporting documentation.

Keywords

sound art, sonic materiality, interconnectivity, sound and space, becoming, feminine sonic subjectivity, intersubjectivity, embodiment, sense and nonsense, phenomenology, relationality, temporality, listening, hearing, difference, others, decolonial, silence, noise, sounding bodies, small sounds.

Summary for Lay Audience

Listening is an engagement with sound and space and others in the shared space of the world. We make sense of the world from experience. Whether we are awake or asleep we are immersed in the sound environment. We experience sound as audible or felt sensation throughout our bodies. How we listen influences how we might hear the world. The fluctuation of sound affirms the changing relations of human and nonhuman forces in the world. Understanding sound as change confirms the potential for transformation. The focus of my research is the interconnection of experiential, relational, and social dimensions of sound and sound art supported by listening and hearing diverse sounding bodies and the possibilities for social change. This research is supported by sound artworks by Canadian women sound artists and my own sound art practice.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Links.....	x
Preface.....	1
Interstice One: Artwork.....	3
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	5
Interstice Two: Artwork.....	26
Chapter 2: Sonic Sense.....	30
Interstice Three: Artwork.....	58
Chapter 3: Becoming Bodies.....	61
Interstice Four: Artwork.....	91
Chapter 4: Other Than Silence.....	94
Interstice Five: Artwork.....	116
Chaper 5: Conclusion.....	120
Interstice Six: Artwork.....	126
Bibliography.....	128
Appendix 1: Exhibitions and Performances.....	134

Appendix 2: Publications and Reviews.....	135
Appendix 3: Curriculum Vitae	136

List of Figures

Figure 1. Constructed image of video triptych. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. Detail from Thesis Exhibition at McIntosh Gallery, London (2021).....	4
Figure 2. Constructed image of video triptych. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 202.....	4
Figure 3. Documentation of installation of sound, moving image, and text animations. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. Thesis exhibition at McIntosh Gallery, London (2021). Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.....	27
Figure 4. Documentation of installation details. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.....	27
Figure 5. Documentation of projection and sound bench. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. McIntosh Gallery, London (2021). Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.....	28
Figure 6. Documentation of video and installation details. <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. McIntosh Gallery, London (2021). Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.....	28
Figure 7. Documentation of sound installation, <i>A Little Piece of String</i> , 2018. Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remai Modern, Saskatoon.....	60
Figure 8. Documentation details. <i>A Little Piece of String</i> . Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remai Modern, Saskatoon	60
Figure 9. Documentation details. <i>A Little Piece of String</i> . Remai Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remai Modern, Saskatoon	60
Figure 10. Documentation of Performance with Jeff Morton of <i>A Little Piece of String</i> , Oct 2018. Remai Modern, Saskatoon. Images courtesy of Remai Modern, Saskatoon.....	61
Figure 11. Collaboration with Helen Pridmore, <i>Sounding Bodies Body Soundings</i> , PAVED Arts, Saskatoon 2019. Video still. Documentation courtesy of PAVED Arts.....	92
Figure 12. Documentation of performance with Helen Pridmore. <i>Sounding Bodies Body Soundings, Sounds Like 9: Real Sound</i> , PAVED Arts and Unheard Sound Collective, Saskatoon, 2019. Video still. Documentation courtesy of PAVED Arts.....	93
Figure 13. Documentation of sound installation. <i>when the crickets hesitate</i> , 2021 in <i>Written on the Earth</i> , curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, 2021. Image credit: Matt Truman.....	118
Figure 14. Documentation of sound installation. <i>when the crickets hesitate</i> , 2021 in <i>Written on the Earth</i> , curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, (2021). Image credit: Matt Truman.....	118

Figure 15. Documentation of sound installation. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021 in *Written on the Earth*, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, (2021). Image credit: Matt Truman..... 118

Figure 16. Video still of performance action. *beginning again*, 2020. Artlab Digital Features (2020), Visual Art Department, Western University. Image credit: Ruth Skinner.....126

Figure 17. Documentation of sound installation. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021 in *Written on the Earth*, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, (2021). Image credit: Matt Truman..... 126

List of Links to Time-Based Media

Link 1: video triptych, <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. Thesis Exhibition, McIntosh Gallery, London.	4
Link 2: Video and Audio Documentation, <i>becoming again beginning undone</i> , 2021. Thesis Exhibition, McIntosh Gallery, London.....	29
Link 3: Audio documentation, <i>A Little Piece of String</i> , 2018. Remail Modern, Saskatoon.....	61
Link 4: On-line conversation with Curator Troy Gronsdahl for <i>A Little Piece of String</i> , Remail Modern, Saskatoon.....	61
Link 5: Video Documentation of collaborative performances, <i>Sounding Bodies / Body Soundings</i> , with Helen Pridmore, SoundsLike: Real Sound, Saskatoon.....	93
Link 6: Audio documentation, <i>when the crickets hesitate</i> , 2021. Written on the Earth, McIntosh Gallery, London.....	118
Link 7: Video documentation of performance action, <i>beginning again</i> , for Artlab Digital Feature, Visual Art Department, Western University, London.....	126

Preface

This research started as an exploration of sound, the senses and sonic experience as relations of materials, bodies, and the sensorial dimensions of sound. It expanded into thinking about the interconnectivity of sound as materiality, sounding—or unsilencing—bodies, and the potential of sound art to transform how we hear the world. Thinking about sound connects to: how we listen; how we make sense from listening; how we understand our relations with others; and how we conceptualize the world. Listening to sound art as a way of knowing affirms the relationality of sound and space, sonic materiality, and embodied experience. Listening to sound of the other is an engagement with the diversity of sounding bodies in the world. My attention is to sound art by women sound artists. The diverse tonalities, sensorial experiences, and fluctuating sonic materiality of sound (art) has transformative capacity. The social and relational dimensions of sound and space and listening have potential to alter how we hear each other and the world. Listening to sound art by women sound artists brings sexuality, feminism, and embodiment into the mix. The intermixing of these elements is the foundation for my speculative proposition for a *feminine sonic*. Its definition unfolds through the thesis.

Small sounds catch my auditory attention. Their sonic textures and peculiarities, fluctuations and rhythms, whisperings and squeaks, gratings and roars, and unpredictability draw me toward them. Listening to the diversity of their frequencies, velocities, and amplitudes is an engagement with the materiality of sound, the resonance of sound and space, and the relations of sound, bodies, and the senses. These small sounds may trigger synesthesia memory (sounds of the cicada feel like a muggy summer day) or evoke the outlier (the revving Harley is the voice of the rebel), the unquiet urban soundscape (the ceaseless drone of traffic on the Don Valley Parkway in the middle of the night), or the uncanny (did I just hear a sound? or did I imagine it?). Their audibility and sensibility endorse the other, the marginal, the unwanted, or the un(der)heard. As

figuration, small sounds offer a synecdoche for ecological fragility, the particular, noise, or the silenced. The understated tonalities of small sounds draw me toward their sonic textures in subjective and intersubjective engagement. The diversity and range of their soundings confirm sonic fluctuation in the world. The ethical, social, or political possibility of small sounds is their ability to direct attention to sound as difference, differing, and the diversity of others. Listening to small sounds is an engagement with the sonic fluctuation of multiple others in the shared space of our collective commons.

In the past 18 months, I have been writing my thesis from my apartment. The decrease in ambient urban sound due to the pandemic has released the muffled audibility of small sounds of the soundscape, as if a limiter has been removed. A sound that I assumed was the snoring of my downstairs neighbor—the sound was repetitive and breath-like, but the rhythms were somewhat peculiar—captivated my attention for its ‘what-is-it-ness?’. Eventually, I discovered it was a woodpecker. Knowing the source of the sound reduced my curiosity initially but thinking about and listening awry offset the binary of unknown = allure and knowing = closure. Listening to the sonic becomings of these small sounds as fluctuating energy-matter opened up the in-between, not-quite-placeable, familiar-yet-different quality of sounds beyond causality. Listening to sound as sonic becomings is a subjective and intersubjective engagement with the sonic fluctuation of the world as a way of knowing. Its potential is transformative: how we listen affects how we might hear the world.

Interstice One: Artwork

becoming again beginning undone (2021)

McIntosh Gallery, London (June 24-July 24, 2021)

My thesis exhibition, *becoming again beginning undone*, presents the interconnectivity of material, sensorial, and cognitive aspects of sound and space and listening. The multi-media installation consists of two sound components, moving image, and text animations. Sonic materiality and sensorial embodiment intermingle with text as liveness. The triptych of text animations presents a statement—or argument—for the dissertation in reference to the chapters on sonic sense, becoming bodies, and the presence/absence of sound/silence. The text animations of the videos mix and remix in new juxtapositions as language in fluctuation. The intermingling of text with the multi-media components performs the interconnectivity of sound, image, and language “as if.” The language of sound and sound art in the text videos intersects with the sonic becomings of the audio compositions and its text-image projection. Sensorial, material, visual, cognitive, and temporal aspects of sound and space and language intersect as a timespace of fluctuating relations. Sound bleeds through the gallery, one component mixing with another. The transgression of boundaries proposes a way to think about our relations with each other and with the world. Listening and hearing sound as the other and as difference—or differing—is performed as the interconnectivity of sonic experience in fluctuation.



Figure 1. Constructed image of video triptych. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021. Detail from Thesis exhibition at McIntosh Gallery, London (2021).

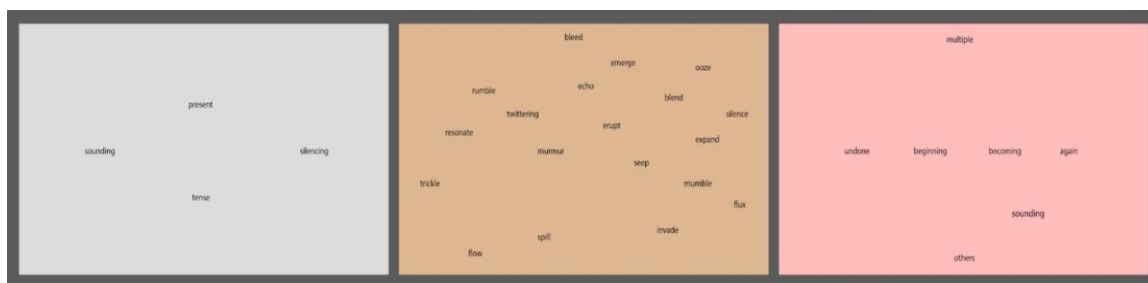


Figure 2. Constructed image of video triptych. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021.

Link 1. Time-based Media: Constructed video triptych. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/580955608>.

Chapter 1 . Introduction

A Proposition

One afternoon in my studio, a 3,000 sq. foot storefront space in a shopping mall, I heard my partner call my name. I distinctly heard my name. The sound was real, or so it seemed. It was also non-directional. I looked up but no one was there. I assumed that I had forgotten to lock the door and expected that he would appear momentarily. Ten minutes later, my partner arrived; he had not been present when I heard my name. David Toop writes about clairaudience as the unexpected sensation of hearing inaudible sounds in literature, visual media, and ancient history. He considers the sensation of clairaudience as the uncanny. In exploring the phenomenon of sound as the “entire continuum from the audible to the inaudible spectrum, including silence, noise, quiet, implicit and imagined sound,” Toop listens to the presence and absence of sound as a haunting or a ghost whose “location in space is ambiguous and whose existence in time is transitory.”¹

The present absence—or the absent presence—of sound complicates listening and hearing. We listen *to* sound *from* within its materiality, transience, and ubiquity as an intersubjective engagement with spatial, temporal, and relational dimensions of sound. Listening is an encounter with that which is beyond me, other than me, and includes me in its production. The relationality of listening implicates me, as the listening subject, in the social space of alterity, shifting boundaries, and multiple constituencies as a co-participant with others in the world and in the co-production of sound. The resonant properties of space—construction materials, dimensions, and architectural features—modulate the sound signal through amplification, sympathetic resonance, and reverberation. The transience of sound is its materiality as energy-matter. We listen to sonic fluctuation in the present-absence of its variability. As phenomenon, sound is

¹ David Toop, *Sinister Resonance* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2010), xiii & xv.

promiscuous, and ubiquitous. Sound is always in more than one place: a sound occurrence in one location emanates across the room, around the corner, and through the window with near-simultaneity. The relational, spatial, and temporal dimensions of sound are its sociality. For Salomé Voegelin, time is inseparable from space: she proposes the term, *timespace*, for the interrelationship of time and space as one complex sensory concept.²

We make sense of the world from experience. The sense we make from sound is an interactive engagement with sound through listening, hearing, and sensing sound by sharing timespace with sonic slippage. We perceive sound through our skin, ears, bones, orifices, and soles of our feet as audible–or inaudible–visceral sensation. We sense the pulse of sonic waves throughout our sentient bodies. We feel sound through the haptic senses, experienced as the sensation of pressure and resistance of sonic vibrations on our skin. We see sound through sonic-kinetic events such as drum sticks on a drum skin or the movement of a church bell. We may plug our ears with our fingers, ear plugs, or noise cancellation headphones however, we cannot block the materiality of sound from our sensorial awareness. Sound is expansive and pervasive; our bodies are responsive. The body is touched by sonic vibration as well as our active intention to listen and to hear sound as sensorial, spatial, social, temporal, and cognitive relations. The totality of material and immaterial sonic phenomenon are the constituent elements of sound art.

The focus of my research into sound art is the experiential dimensions of sound and sound art with attention to sound art by Canadian women sound artists without exclusivity. My proposal is for a *feminine sonic* as a sonic sensibility that embraces heterogeneity, diversity, and difference in production. The presence and absence of sound (and silence) of Toop's clairaudience as that which cannot be measured or fully accounted for seeps into my research through my emphasis on the experiential. Differentiating between the imagined and the actual of sound is elusive.

² Salomé Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Toward a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2010), 124-125.

A standard sound art tool kit includes frequencies, decibels, and intensities. The produced sound artwork may be a single tone, a text, or an unsounding object, meaning the artwork may use sound as a medium (in) itself or involve media other than sound. Experientially, the sound artwork may be audible or inaudible. The absence of a single disciplinary affiliation, sensibility, intentionality, or relationality precludes a simple definition for sound art practice. This could be rephrased as opulence rather than deficit due to the multiplicity of options and affiliations. The language for, of, and about sound art intersects with music/noise/silence, visual art, time-based media, sound studies, cultural studies, and performance studies. Sound artworks range from a virtual performance to a live event, from a gallery installation to a site-specific work, from radio art to an on-line project, from audio to visual media, from an object to a notation, from sound to silence, and from a mediated audio walk to a durational composition of 639 years.³

Largely missing from sound art literature are women sound artists with exceptions such as Pauline Oliveros, Maryanne Amacher, Janet Cardiff, Christine Kubisch, Annea Lochwood, Éliane Radigue, Jana Winderen, and Hildegard Westerkamp.⁴ Women are un(der)represented in anthologies, histories, and theoretical texts on the sonic arts.⁵ Exceptions are texts written by women.⁶ What's at stake due to the gap in literature on women sound artists is collective knowledge, community, and dialogue. As a woman sound artist, my knowledge of male counterparts exceeds that of women sound artists. My awareness of women's sound art is often through group exhibitions, live events, word-of-mouth, and independent research. In reflecting on the gap, my questions about

³ John Cage's *Organ²/ASLSP (As Slow as Possible)* is a sound installation in Halberstadt, Germany that began in 2001. The work ends in 2640.

⁴ Sound art publications are dominated by male writers and sound artists. A few examples are: Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, ed., *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, Caleb Kelly, ed., *Sound: Documents of Contemporary Art*, and Seth Kim Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward A Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*. These books are weighted toward male sound artists. My argument is not their coverage in itself, but the underrepresentation of women sound artists.

⁵ Critical writing, web sites, and anthologies feature male sound artists. Whether literature reflects practice or personal preference is a question. What criteria are reflected in critical writing for the selection of sound artists.

⁶ The writing of Andra McCartney, Ellen Waterman, Tara Rogers, and Salomé Voegelin contribute to literature on women sound artists and musicians. Pauline Oliveros and Hildegard Westerkamp writing incorporate writing into their practice.

sound, sound art, and gender increase: (where) are the women sound artists? what are their soundings? does gender have a sonic sensibility? if so, is the sound of gender audible or inaudible? if not, are systemic structures biased against women?

These questions are not new, a fact that increases their legitimacy and urgency. Tara Rogers' *Pink Noises*, an anthology of women electro-acoustic musicians, points to social or cultural structures that silence or dismiss women electronic musicians. She argues that in "dominant discourses and practice in sound reproduction, technological forms and processes that are culturally coded as female or maternal have been systematically devalued or controlled."⁷ In addressing the absence of women DJs, electronic musicians, and sound artists in the electronic music scene, Rogers aims to destabilize binary categories of gender through the theorization of electronic music practices.⁸ I follow her lead with research into sound art by women as a sensibility, ethics, politics, and social relations.

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The *feminine sonic* is a proposal for a new sonic timespace and sensibility with an emphasis on Canadian women sound artists, without exclusivity. My attention is to audible and inaudible dimensions of sound art as material, ethical, and intersubjective relations of sound, and difference. A definition of the feminine sonic unfolds through a consideration of sound artworks, embodiment, and listening/hearing, supported by philosophy of sound art, materialism, and perception. I begin with the senses, sound, and bodies using phenomenology, sonic materiality, and feminist new materialism to listen to sound art in relation to the subject and becoming. I navigate the directionality, force, and energy of sonic materiality while attending to philosophical and experiential dimensions of sound and sound art, listening, sensing, and hearing women sound artists. I sample the diversity of their soundings as conceptual, contextual, ecological, and listening practices

⁷ Tara Rogers, *Pink Noises: Women and Electronic Music and Sound* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 12.

⁸ Rogers, *Pink Noises*, 4.

using feminist phenomenology as a methodology to affirm the subject, embodiment, and positionality. My goal is to contribute to literature on sound art by highlighting the work of women sound artists. The risk in featuring sound artworks of women sound artists is reproduction of the gender binary, however the deficit in attention to women sound artists in Canada in sound art literature needs to be addressed. Rogers recognizes the instability of the terms, *women* and *men*, but she notes that gender is an organizational structure for electronic music histories and resources.⁹ The feminine sonic approaches gender in terms of multiplicity rather than negation: woman is not the other of man; and the feminine is not the other of the masculine. The feminine is in its own right as multiplicity and not negation.¹⁰ The feminine sonic includes male sound artists, although not as principle artists: their position in this text is often as the opening act. The featured sound artworks by women sound artists employ diverse approaches to production, technology, engagement, and space(s) as a speculative proposition for the feminine sonic.

The gendered sensibility of the feminine sonic draws from feminist writing, new materialism, and feminist phenomenology. Hélène Cixous' *écriture féminine* is a method of feminine writing that refuses the silence and silencing of women by systemic structures of patriarchy.¹¹ Her notion of writing as process and transformation connects to the materiality of new feminist materialism. Rosi Braidotti advocates that woman is not a fixed social category but a subject who is becoming through the enfolding of external influences and unfolding outward of affects. Feminist phenomenology reinvigorates Simone de Beauvoir's notion of the body as a situation and of the situated embodied woman who is shaped by experience–history, culture and society—and actively engaged with the world.¹² The feminine sonic explores experiential and social relations of sound and sound art as engagement with the other as difference to ask how sound artists listen

⁹ Rogers, *Pink Noises*, 4.

¹⁰ I credit Helen Fielding with this insight.

¹¹ Cixous advocated that woman write herself by returning to her body, her sexuality, and her voice to end the silencing of women by phallogocentric structures. Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976): 875-93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173239>.

¹² Dorothea E. Olkowski, "Using Our Intuition: Creating the Future Phenomenological Plane of Thought," in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 4.

to or engage with sound, how sound (art) bends thinking and perception, and how perception shifts our understanding of each other and the world.

Our relations with others and opportunities in the world are shaped by gender, class, race, economics, abilities, and chance. As an able-bodied, white woman of Scottish-English-Irish ancestry, a settler history that extends to the mid-19th c., and a multi-generational medical family tree, I have privilege. As one of four sisters, however, the kitchen rhetoric of economic independence for women was bracketed by gender as well as class. My refusal to conform was the result of friendships, empathy, restlessness, and curiosity about the world and others. The relations of inheritance, privilege, the individual, and the social are entangled. Of importance is how we use our social, political, cultural, and economic positions in order to understand and engage with each other and the world. (How) might listening alter how we hear gender, race, and the other?

Anne Carson asks how gender informs how we listen to and hear the other.¹³ Her essay on patriarchal attitudes about sound and women in ancient Greek society exposes how men hear and evaluate women's sound and soundings. The question is whether—or to what extent—attitudes about sound and gender are embedded in western culture. Rogers identifies “patrilinear lines of descent and universalizing male claims to creation” in electronic music through cultural ideologies of normativity, heterosexuality, and capitalist reproduction.¹⁴ In thinking against mainstream ideologies, she expounds on how sound(s) themselves are reproductive.¹⁵ “Reproductive sounds are variously *produced* by bodies, technologies, environments, and their accompanying histories; *reproduced* in multiple reflections off reverberant surfaces or in recording media; *reproducible* within spaces of memory and storage that hold sounds for future playbacks; and *productive*, by generating multiple meaning in various contexts.”¹⁶ Rogers reclaims the concept of reproduction by transposing the language of the maternal to sound art

¹³ Anne Carson, “The Gender of Sound” in *Glass Irony and God* (New York, NY: New Directions Books, 1992/1995), 119-142.

¹⁴ Tara Rogers, *Pink Noises*, 15.

¹⁵ Tara Rogers, *Pink Noises*, 15.

¹⁶ Italics are in the original text. Tara Rogers, *Pink Noises*, 15.

production. My ambivalence to embrace her act of reclamation fully is that reproduction is not a solo act.

Cixous approaches gender through writing, an action that involves the other, transformation, and bisexuality by “working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and of the other... infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another.”¹⁷ As a space of discovery and exploration, Cixous’ writing includes the adventure of the other, the multiple, heterogeneity, and bisexuality with potential for transformation.¹⁸ The notion of writing as process that offers “*the very possibility of change*” has affinity with the sensorial, temporal, and non-linear dimensions of sound, listening, and embodiment as (inter)subjective relations with the other.¹⁹ Cixous’ writing as a process of exploration for finding one’s way aligns with Westerkamp’s sounding practice as a form of navigation by sounding the invisible typography of place.²⁰ Westerkamp’s attention to nonhuman living forces reflects her deep commitment to acoustic ecology as living forces in the world.

The feminine sonic extends Cixous’ notion of gender and bisexuality as an intertwining of masculinity and femininity—one within the other—to sound art through the non-binary subject of Rosi Braidotti’s becoming-woman as a multiple subject with nomadic consciousness who interconnects to and with the other. The interconnectivity of Braidotti’s metamorphosis as the Deleuzian subject “folding-in external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects” suggests the mobius strip as a figurative mode.²¹ In becoming, the subject interconnects to and with the other which connects to

¹⁷ Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” 883.

¹⁸ Cixous writes about process as “not about destiny, but about the adventure of such and such a trip, crossings, trudes, abrupt and gradual awakenings, discoveries of a zone at one time timorous and soon to be forthright.” Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” 885.

¹⁹ Writing offers a “space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures.” The italics are in the original text. Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa,” 879.

²⁰ Andra McCartney “Sounding Places, Situated Conversations Through the Soundscape Composition of Hildegard Westerkamp,” (PhD diss, York University, 1999), 11.

²¹ Rosi Braidotti in Rick Dolphin and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies* (Ann Arbor, MI: New Humanities Press, 2012), 106.

the subject. Rather than *being* a gender, the subject is *becoming*.²² Braidotti's feminist nomadic project addresses identity, subjectivity, and power in terms of the "multi-differentiated and situated perspective."²³ The becoming-woman is the outcome of her lived reality as a woman who "because of my gender, historically speaking, never quite made it into full humanity, so my allegiance to that category is a best negotiable and never to be taken for granted."²⁴ Gender is not fixed; it is a process that responds to the external conditions of the subject. Cixous' bisexuality connects with Braidotti's multiple subject. Both writers contest structures of power, the silencing of difference, and the politics of silence. The non-unitary subject of Braidotti's new feminist materialism and Cixous writing the body has conceptual affinity with the fluctuation of sonic materiality, the reciprocity of sound and space, and processes of transformation within sound production.

The non-binary subject listens to the tonalities of bodies, technology, sound and space, and intersubjectivities as relations with (the) other(s) in the collective space of the sonic. The feminine sonic intertwines subjective and intersubjective dimensions of sound, bodies, and the condition of production with difference and diversity by using strategies such as active listening and performativity. Sensorial, social, material, and relational aspects of sound, space, and listening mix. The energies, impulses, and politics of sound as becoming vibrate the sonic space of the feminine sonic by contesting systemic structures and biases about sound and gender, the other, or difference.²⁵

The feminine sonic positions itself within sound art practices: it bleeds into existing territories and across borders. Materiality, conceptual art, and contextual art practices intersect with phenomenology and feminist phenomenology. Extending Cixous' process of writing "in a place other than silence" to sound art is a way to contest systemic

²² The italics are mine.

²³ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 36.

²⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), 130.

²⁵ "It is by writing from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is in a place other than silence." Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," 881.

structures that silence. Unmuting silence connects writing to sound art. For Cixous, writing is “*marked*” by the political and “typically masculine” economy from which the woman “never has *her* turn to speak.” Woman is silenced by systemic structures of patriarchy. Being marked is not exclusive to gender or to discipline: it is embedded in systemic structures throughout western history as a manifestation of power relations, including sound.

Brandon LaBelle criticized John Cage for his oversight toward the conditions and social structures that “*precede*” and influence listening as his non-awareness of the political dimension of his own work. For LaBelle, sounds are always “*marked*.”²⁶ The feminine sonic listens to bodies sounding their difference(s), to different ways of hearing, to differences in hearing abilities, and to cultural difference as an intersectional method of overlapping social and political identities. Listening practices acknowledge the interconnectivity of sound, bodies, environments, and difference of political, cultural, and social relations. The decolonial practice of listening as advocated by Stó:lō/Skwah writer Dylan Robinson is a call for a perceptual decolonization “defined through situated and context-specific relationships to place, time, and kinship.”²⁷ Shifting a colonial perception requires listening to the other’s knowledge, temporality, and tones. This will be expanded upon in a decolonial sound project that used what Robinson calls a “decolonial dialogic” approach to develop new compositions by non-Indigenous composers.²⁸ How we listen to difference has the potential to make a difference in the shared space of the collective of subjectivities and intersubjectivities. The interconnectivity of experiences that bodies bring with them and how this might shape a gendered sensibility to listening and hearing opens up multiple ways of hearing and sounding.

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²⁶ The italics are in the original text. Brandon LaBelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2007), 51.

²⁷ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 253.

²⁸ *of-the-now: Decolonial Imaginings*, <https://www.of-the-now.ca/decolonialimaginings/>.

In scope, sound art practices encompass silence and noise, intentional and incidental and audible and inaudible sound, analog and electronic methods for production and transmission, mediated and acoustic sound, bodies, the senses, and timespace. Cognition and sensorial embodiment of sounding bod(ies) intermingle as relations of materiality, transmission, and reception in the interpretive space of sound and conditions of its production. The diversity and differentiated sonic rhythms of sounding bodies open up a new symbolic space and social relations with potential for dialogue and communication. Listening/hearing is the totality of sensorial, social, and spatial aspects of sound art and embodiment. This opens up questions. When we embody sound art, are we listening as experience, hearing for meaning, or intermingling sensation and interpretation? Do we (un)consciously bracket our listening, or are we receptive to any sounds that occur? These questions are rhetorical. The diversity and difference within sound art practices elude compression into a sound bite.

The history of sound art connects to shifts in music/noise/silence of the early to mid-20th c. and to conceptual, contextual, and performative art practices of the late 1960s and 1970s.²⁹ Discourse is active with theoretical indiscipline and debate.³⁰ While women are a minor presence in sound art literature, they are audible in the history of sound art. In some cases, the sound artworks of women align dialogically with their male colleagues: the intersubjective and social anarchy of Pauline Oliveros' listening practices counterbalance John Cage's active listening and anarchy; Éliane Radigue's electroacoustic tonal compositions are distinct from the musique concrète of Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry but enabled by her access to their electronic equipment such as tape editors and analog synthesizers; and Hildegard Westerkamp's involvement with

²⁹ The socio-political context of sound art is 20th c. developments in science-technology, the industrial-military complex, urban expansion, environmental destruction, and second wave feminism.

³⁰ In advocating for noise, Jacques Attali called for "*theoretical indiscipline*, with an ear to sound matter as a herald of society." Attali's analysis of culture (music and noise) is in relation to political economy. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 5. By contrast, the "listening awry" of Jim Drobnick is receptive to the meanings of "murmurs and cacophony" and to hearing in the noisy world in which we live and participate in generating sound. His call for an interdisciplinary approach to sound is in relation to cultural, political, and physical contexts as a social connectedness that guards "against essentializing as an autonomous realm." Jim Drobnick, ed. *Aural Cultures* (Toronto, ON: YYZ Books, 2004), 10.

R. Murray Schafer's World Soundscape Project evolved to her independent practice of acoustic sound walks and acoustic ecology. In other cases, the work of women sound artists is independent: Maryanne Amacher's exploration of psychoacoustic phenomena in site-specific installations; Janet Cardiff's multi-channel sound installations with George Bures Miller as well as her independent mediated sound walks; and Christina Kubisch's electrical walks that follow audible electromagnetic fields.³¹

The term 'sound art' was coined in early 1980's.³² Max Neuhaus criticized the term—and visual art institutions—for conflating the medium with the art form. For him, sound art was new music, not a new art form.³³ My attention is to writers and practitioners who approach sound art through sonic materiality, conceptual and contextual art practices, and the philosophy of sound. Christoph Cox's sonic materiality differentiates between sound art and music in terms of intensity and transcendence.³⁴ He advocates that sound art samples from sonic flux as fluctuating materiality of energy matter of the world is an ontological position.³⁵ The universality of Cox's sonic materiality presents a limiter for the subject with its fluctuating materiality in terms of agency. The body has capacity to act and to be acted upon, but the subject lacks agential capacity.³⁶ The problem for feminist thinking will be addressed further on.

³¹ It could be argued that sound walks of Westerkamp and Kubisch connect through their exploration of the everyday sonic environment. Cardiff's sound walks reference narrative cinema rather than ecology or the real of the urban environment.

³² Kelly Caleb, *Sound Documents: Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), 72.

³³ Kelly Caleb, *Sound Documents*, 15.

³⁴ Christoph Cox, *Sonic Flux: Sound, Art, and Metaphysics* (Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 113.

³⁵ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 115.

³⁶ Cox credits Friedrich Nietzsche with developing an ontology of events and Gilles Deleuze with an ontology of effect as distinct entities of bodies and of events of effects. Bodies have the capacity to act and be acted upon; events of effects are caused by bodies but are different from them. Christoph Cox, "Sonic Thought," in *Sonic Thinking: A Media Philosophical Approach*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2017), 104.

G. Douglas Barrett aligns sound art to the autonomous sound of absolute music of the 19th c. as the separation of sound from language and social meaning.³⁷ Rather than “sound art” as a term, he advocates for “critical music” as a mutable site to reconfigure music as a site for political agency.³⁸ For him, sound art is caught between music as organized sound and contemporary art: it has not resolved its identity. Seth Kim-Cohen’s non-cochlear approach to sound art calls for an ‘aboutness’ for sound rather than sound-for-itself.³⁹ He follows sound as it materializes into material sound objects, notation, text-based works, or fluxus events. Both Barrett and Kim-Cohen place sound art within the conceptual frame of linguistic, philosophical, social, and political terms. Their emphasis on language, meaning, signification, and interpretation of and about the artwork draws on the cognitive aspect the sound artwork.

LaBelle positions sound art with the visual and performing arts, site-specific practices, and subjectivities that confirm the sociality of sound in relation to the world of which it is a part.⁴⁰ Performance and Installation art of the 1960s and ‘70s shifted attention from objects to environments, from single perspective to multiple viewpoints, and from the body toward others. LaBelle considers these shifts as the “relational, spatial, and temporal nature of sound itself.”⁴¹ He credits Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* and its influence on Happenings, Fluxus, and Minimalism by activating space and perception for the situated subject.⁴² Connecting consciousness and the corporeal presence of the subject as relations with the world challenges analytic thought and notions of the unity of culture.⁴³ Salomé Voegelin’s philosophy of sound art starts

³⁷ Conceptual art practices shift emphasis from the artwork itself to meaning and language in order to engage with critical discourse with the real and to dismantle medium specificity.

³⁸ Barrett, *After Music*, 1-2.

³⁹ His non-cochlear sonic theory for sound art references Duchamp’s notion of non-retinal visual art to expand what constitutes sound art. For him, sound art is not limited to the sonic or to the notion of sound-in-itself. Seth Kim-Cohen, *In the Blink of an Ear: Toward a Non-Cochlear Sonic Art* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2009), xxii.

⁴⁰ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, xii.

⁴¹ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, xii.

⁴² Merleau-Ponty stated “[m]y body is where it has something to do.” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London, EN: Routledge, (1945) 2002), 260.

⁴³ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 78.

with a sonic subject who engages with sound through listening. Voegelin advocates for listening as pluralist perception of the generative, experiential multi-sensoriality of sound to support difference as an engagement with the world.⁴⁴ Her proposal for listening to audible and inaudible aspects of sound art brings ethics to social and political dimensions as a sonic sensibility. It creates the conditions for listening, the recognition and negotiation of difference, and the right to hear and to be heard in contrast to what she calls the undifferentiated universality of visibility as knowledge and truth. She extends the political and ethical aspects of the invisible and of sound to rights to hear and to be heard. Her recognition and negotiation of difference as the social dimension of sound offer an ethical foundation for sound art as sonic possible worlds.

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The feminine sonic connects sonic materiality with feminist new materialism and phenomenology. In asking “what it would mean to *think sonically* rather than merely to *think about sound*,”⁴⁵ Christoph Cox advocates for a materialistic theory of sound as “forces and intensities, and becomings that compose the world.”⁴⁶ Sound exists as “independently existing entities” not bound to objects, minds, or the properties of its source.⁴⁷ The materiality of sound is its becoming as ontological flux. The separation of sound from its source releases the capacity of a sound event with potential to multiply into phenomena such as the Butterfly effect.⁴⁸ Effects confirm the becoming of materiality. While Cox recognizes the transformative capacity of sound, he refuses the agential capacity of bodies or the capacity of bodies for transformation. For him, bodies are things without sexual difference, subjectivities, or capacities for action. Cox’s

⁴⁴ Salomé Voegelin, “Aurality and Environment,” FASE 6, Berlin, 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtkUJ4-4e-Q>

⁴⁵ Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 99.

⁴⁶ He extends this proposal to rethinking the arts in general in reference to Deleuze’s conception of art works as presentation rather than representation. Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 37.

⁴⁷ Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 103.

⁴⁸ “The isolation of or individuation characteristic of such effects is very different than that of a thing, substance, subject, or person. Deleuze calls them “haecceities,” which names a mode of individuation characteristic of *events*: a wind... a river, a climate, an hour of the day, a mood, etc.” Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 105.

thinking sonically differentiates between the materiality of energy-matter and bodies which have capacity for actions, interactions, and reactions.⁴⁹

In rethinking the unity of the subject and consciousness, Braidotti's "acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries" resonates with sonic fluctuation.⁵⁰ Her nomadic consciousness offers a way to think about the subject beyond a phallogentric vision of the subject by linking the "body and mind in a new set of intensive and often intransitive transitions."⁵¹ Nomadic subjects embody experience through intersubjective intermingling of bodies with each other and the world that transform the consciousness of the subject. They are continuously becoming and enfolding experiences as a process of shaping and being shaped.⁵² The interconnectivity of inside and outside is sonic in its thinking; borders are not fixed. The becoming-consciousness is never static. As such, it is in fluctuation, akin to sonic flux. The body is situated in the dynamic forces of (sonic) materiality. She is becoming its materiality.⁵³

Braidotti's embodied and embedded material feminism affirms a situated perspective to the subject as an ethical position rather than a detached or abstracted perspective. Her situated perspective offers *potentia* as affirmative and productive of alternate subjective positions and social relations rather than the notion of *potestas* as negative and confining. The nomadic subject enfolds experience in her becoming, she becomes the experience she enfolds. The materiality of subjectivity transforms the centred subject by rejecting the

⁴⁹ Marie Thompson criticizes the ontology of Cox for its universality; for her ontology is aligned with speculative realism, object-oriented ontology, and new materialism. Despite her criticisms I accept Cox's sonic materiality as forces of energy matter of the world of the real. Effects such as climate change and global warming are the result of human activities, but the effects exceed the events. Forces beyond the human are the world in which we live. Sonic materiality is akin to this energy matter. Marie Thompson "Whiteness and the Ontological Turn in Sound Studies," *Parallax*, 23:3 (2017) 266-282, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2017.1339967>.

⁵⁰ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 26.

⁵¹ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

⁵² Christine Daigle, "Trans-subjectivity/Trans-objectivity," in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 186-87.

⁵³ Cox credits Friedrich Nietzsche with developing an ontology of events and Gilles Deleuze with an ontology of effect as distinct entities of bodies and of events of effects. Bodies have the capacity to act and be acted upon; events of effects are caused by bodies but are different from them. Christoph Cox, "Sonic Thought," 104.

notion of “authentic identities” as a move away from hegemony.⁵⁴ She extends the notion of sexual difference to ethics, and to feminism as a form of multiple consciousness of differences.⁵⁵ The nomadic consciousness of Braidotti’s nomadic subject brings a critical consciousness and a political agency that refuses “socially coded modes of thought and behavior.”⁵⁶ Her notion, *as if*, affirms the potential of “fluid boundaries, a practice of intervals, of interfaces and of the interstices.”⁵⁷ The fluidity of boundaries affirms the potential for transformation.

Materialist feminists and posthumanists such as Nancy Tuana and Karen Barad challenge what they consider as the boundaries and fixity of Braidotti’s new materialism on the grounds that Braidotti “underemphasizes the very material aspect of the world.”⁵⁸ For me, the materiality of nomadic consciousness and the potential for transformation is real material change. The intersection of Braidotti’s nomadic subject and Cox’s sonic materiality connects her political agency to his sonic thinking as a speculative position. Sound art bends sound, experience, and perception with capacity to produce effect and affect. The social and spatial dimensions of sound art confirm the relationality of sound to transformation within the shared space of the collective. Multiple soundings as difference extend to an ethical sensibility for sound art and the feminine sonic. Less clearly considered is the agential capacity of the subject. Feminist phenomenology addresses agency through the phenomenal consciousness of the situated subject in the world as the inseparability of intersubjectivity and ethics from the world.⁵⁹ The active participation of the subject in the structures of the world is its agency. The body (flesh)

⁵⁴ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 5.

⁵⁵ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

⁵⁶ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 5.

⁵⁷ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 5-7.

⁵⁸ Daigle, “Trans-subjectivity/Trans-objectivity,” 187.

⁵⁹ Simone de Beauvoir’s recognition of the situated woman as an embodied woman is foundational for feminist phenomenology. “A body that is a situation and is not a ‘thing’ changes. So if the body is precisely the situation in which we grasp the world and set the process of discovery in motion, the situated woman is ‘embodied, inter-subjective, shaped by history, culture, and society,’ and, importantly, actively engaged with the world.” Dorothea E. Olkowski, “Using Our Intuition,” in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 4.

and subjectivity (consciousness) are the total structure of lived relations and actions of embodied subjects in and with the material world and with other human subjects.⁶⁰

Active listening connects phenomenology and activist practices through relationality, ethics, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and diversity. For Voegelin, listening is a way of engaging with the world: “It is in the engagement with the world rather than in its perception that the world and myself within it are constituted.”⁶¹ The listener is “entwined with the heard.”⁶² Her sonic subject listens actively as an individual act of sense-making in a phenomenal sense.⁶³ The experience is contingent, relational, and intersubjective. For her, the social and political aspects of listening are at the level of the aesthetic, sensorial engagement of sound where “we can discuss the political... as a fluid reality generated in the process of listening to sound.”⁶⁴ The depth of Voegelin’s sonic thinking maintains the complexity of sound’s immateriality and the potential of sound art for transformation as an understanding of our relations within the world and with each other.

Research-activists Lucia Firth and Claudia Farinati approach listening practices as a strategic practice grounded in feminist consciousness-raising practices from the 1960s and the political and feminist epistemologies of listening and speaking.⁶⁵ They bring ethics and politics to listening as a social and relational practice with potential for social change. Listening practices connect to the other: “[l]istening is always through the ear of the other.”⁶⁶ Robert Sember of Ultra-red sound art collective extends the intersubjectivity of listening to the other with Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining which “opens the space of the

⁶⁰ This includes how the body perceives and is perceived. Helen A. Fielding, “A Feminist Phenomenology Manifesto,” in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), xi.

⁶¹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 3.

⁶² Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

⁶³ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 11.

⁶⁴ The relation of sound to time and space – the timespace is reciprocal: the completion of each other through equal difference without abandoning themselves. Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 165.

⁶⁵ Lucia Farinati and Claudia Firth, *The Force of Listening* (Berlin: Errant Bodies Press: DORMATS⁶, 2017), 10.

⁶⁶ Robert Sember in Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 39.

political within the phenomenological.”⁶⁷ I extend active listening to underheard sounds and the feminine sonic.

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I return to gender and sound to connect listening/hearing to Anne Carson’s question of how assumptions about gender affect how men hear women’s sound.⁶⁸ To rephrase the question I ask whether there is a relation between sound, hearing, and gender?⁶⁹ Is there a sonic sensibility of gender? I approach these questions by ‘thinking sonically’ to bend perception as speculation. As if. How we think has potential to alter our perception and relations with the world. What is fixed? What can be changed? Thinking is not bound to a single interpretation or universal position.

The feminine sonic asks how gender informs our perception of the world. Perception and the lived experience of the situated body inform and are informed by the reciprocity of our actions and interactions with the world. The gendered body is generative and generated through her engagement in and of the world and others. In recognizing sexual difference as difference without sameness, the feminine sonic asks what and whose sound might constitute a feminine sensibility. What might it mean to ‘think the feminine sonically’? Braidotti’s *potentia* resonates with Gertrude Stein’s literary writing which bends stability and perception through language. In her experimental literary text, *Tender Buttons* (1914), Stein performs everyday objects to shift spatial position, form, and meaning. Her language transforms the quotidian object into what Steve McCaffrey considers “profound ambiguity... to call attention to its own system of differences.”⁷⁰ She bends how we might understand the object:

⁶⁷ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 38.

⁶⁸ Carson, “The Gender of Sound,” 122.

⁶⁹ The minor is a philosophical concept by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari that connects the minor to ethical action. In patriarchy, they connect the becoming-minor to the becoming-woman (and numerous other becomings) as forms of deterritorialization. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 105-106.

⁷⁰ Steve McCaffrey “The Difference is Spreading,” *Tender Buttons* (Toronto, ON: Book Thug, 2008), xii.

Book was there, it was there, book was there. Stop it,
 stop it. It was a cleaner, a wet cleaner and it was
 not where it was wet...⁷¹

In the process of its spatial relocation—or stasis—the book is transformed into “a cleaner, a wet cleaner, and it was not where it was wet.” Subsequently, it morphs from a spatial location “where” to a quality “wet.” The mutations in Stein’s language break down meaning by refusing a normative status to the object as a signifier. Meaning and the object become fluid and porous. Expectations are undone. Further in the same text, Stein writes:

Cover up cover up with a little piece of string
 and hope rose and green, green.⁷²

The reader engages with a reality in flux; the object (the signifier) is no longer a given (meaning). What can be covered up with “a little piece of string”? The reader begins again, stripped of assumptions. She becomes attentive to the text for what it is, what it presents, and its possibilities. For me, Stein’s text is sonic: the fluidity of her shifts, associative potential, and playful nonsense endorses the materiality of transformation and becoming. Stein’s mutations support the feminine sonic as a sensibility and a way of thinking with difference as a speculative proposition that connects to listening awry and to listening to others.⁷³ How we think extends to how bodies orient in space. Orientation relates to social structures, gender, and social relations.⁷⁴ How do we hear these orientations? Listening awry to sound artworks extends to consciousness of sexuality and

⁷¹ Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*, (Toronto, ON: Book Thug, 2008), 39.

⁷² Stein, *Tender Buttons*, 40.

⁷³ Jim Drobnick proposes *listening awry* for sonic engagement that emphasizes “dialecticalness and ethical agency” in reference to Slavoj Žižek’s “looking awry” as a way of looking at things from an angle as an interested position rather than an objective perspective. Jim Drobnick, ed. *Aural Cultures*, 11.

⁷⁴ Sarah Ahmed uses queer phenomenology to address the body’s orientation in space to ask how we inhabit space as “lines of thought” and “lines of motion” as performative in terms of “how we find our way and ... know which direction we face...” She connects movement to “commitment and social investment.” Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1-2, 16, and 17.

difference. Listening to sound (art) with awareness to systemic and structural biases opens the question of who else is silenced?

The feminine sonic is a becoming-frame for sound art by women sound artists.⁷⁵ The transposition of Cixous' notion of writing as process is a way of finding direction. Stein's linguistic transformations bend ways of thinking, understanding, and listening that connect to perception, assumptions, knowledge, and experience. The feminine sonic extends notions of becoming to becoming-other, becoming-multiple, and becoming-natureculture. These ideas connect Braidotti's nomadic consciousness, the intersubjectivity of Voegelin's listening, and the sensual disturbance that Carson's women make audible. In challenging the binary of the feminine and the masculine, Cixous' bisexuality affirms a sonic sensibility of difference and multiplicity within the feminine sonic.

The energy of these becomings is amplified by the dynamic transience and materiality of sound art. Their rowdiness is akin to Cox's sonic thinking, the transgression of boundaries and territorialisation as a process. The nomadic consciousness of Braidotti proposes a borderless space as a collective common with shared responsibilities, difference, and the ethical responsibility to others and the environment. As a borderless space, the collective common expands the territory beyond its existing boundaries, similar to materiality of sound, of becoming, and of woman. Becoming sonic bodies are situated within the materiality of energy matter in relation to its materiality and to each other. How to think about sound art through the feminine sonic is an ongoing discussion about sound as a sonic sensibility in relation to structures of power, complicated by the transience and ubiquity of sound, with the goal to un-silence the silencing of the other. This is the agential capacity of feminine sonic subjects.

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⁷⁵ Cixous understood writing about femininity and sexuality as a process and a gradual awakening. She emphasizes the adventure of writing rather than the destiny; for her writing is "not about destiny." This might be expressed as the emphasis on process rather than product. Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," 885.

The three chapters are distinct in style, rhythm, and structure as a gesture to recognize difference, multiplicity, the becoming subject, the temporal dimension of sound and listening, sonic materiality, intersubjectivity, and the other. Each chapter opens with a narrative of an event—a sound concert or a non-art encounter with sound—to highlight a specific dimension of sound as an event or analogy. The personal narratives situate me as a sonic subject in the world. The experiential, contextual, and relational approach to writing embodies the materiality of sound as fluctuation, the phenomenal experience of the situated body listening, and the real of the sound artwork. Stylistically and structurally, my writing is influenced by Stein, Virginia Woolf, Yves Lomax, Cixous, and Cage with their subjective, experimental, or idiosyncratic ways of bending perception, their playfulness with language and syntax, and their use of stream-of-consciousness.

Case studies focus on sound art by women sound artists without exclusivity of citizenship or gender, although most artists featured are Canadian women. The selected artworks present a sampler of sounding bodies, materialities, and sound artworks that reflect diverse approaches to production, strategies of engagement, aesthetics, and spaces. The works range from an unmediated sound walk to a collaborative performance using DIY interfaces and electronics, from an interactive sound sculpture to hand-written notation, and from a sound installation with repurposed electronics and foraged materials to an imagined composition. Writing about the work of these artists intersects with my sound installation practice.

This research-creation extends the boundaries of sound art by intersecting phenomenology, the philosophy of sound art, and sonic materiality using feminist phenomenology as a methodology. My process of writing about artworks employed a phenomenological reading of the work in the context of its presentation. In some instances, my writing about artworks was done from memory, providing I could recall the embodied experience of the work.⁷⁶ Featured sound artworks employ various strategies

⁷⁶ Writing from memory rather than from direct experience with some artworks was due to Covid travel restrictions. Since March 2020, I have been able to access works only within the region of southeastern Ontario.

of listening, interactivity, and performativity to address interconnected relations of decolonialism, technology, and ethical and ecological questions. Artworks approach sound, the body, site, production, and methods of engagement with difference. In presenting the works, I connect the feminine and feminism, the feminine and the masculine, sound and the senses, the body and becoming, materiality and phenomenology, the subject and the other, and subjectivity and intersubjectivity.

The feminine sonic intertwines sound, bodies, phenomenology, feminist new materiality, and sound art as becoming, bisexuality, and temporalities through listening and unsilencing. Listening raises the awareness of others, consciousness, and ethical questions to bend expectations about normativity and to generate empathy. The feminine sonic brings attention to gender and the other through voice and silence to ask: whose sound is amplified? whose sound is muted? whose voice is heard in public? who controls the public space? how do listeners engage with the work? and how does sound art connect to the other? The feminine sonic offers a frame for listening to becoming bodies and their soundings as relations that are other than silence. Listening to sounding bodies concerns the other, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, embodiment, and connectedness as social, relational, political, and ethical dimensions of sound.

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Interstice Two: Artwork

becoming again beginning undone (2021)

McIntosh Gallery, London (June 24-July 24, 2021)

The main gallery is dimly-lit. Audio cables, objects, and materials are splayed on the gallery floor producing a material-techno-organic-aesthetic-and-sensibility of a becoming ecology of interconnected lines of flowing current that meander through space. The multi-channel sound installation is an evolving composition of recordings, textures, scratches, and extended tones of visceral and irregular small soundings. The decentred soundscape extends to a generative notation of sound objects and phonetic text as a live projection in an adjacent room. Graphic sound waves trace the audio signal. Phonetic texts fade in and out as fleeting signifiers of sense and nonsense bound by the limitations of text to represent sound. Small sounds, image, text, rhythms, and tonalities bleed into and mix with each other, transgressing the borders of space and containment. Sounds of the installation are interrupted by sound emanating from the sound bench. The sensorial, material sonic experience of the sound bench is accessed through the haptic senses. These autonomous sound artworks intersect and mix as contamination, dialogue, and affect. Together, they offer an embodied experiential environment for listening to sound artworks within the symbolic social space of the gallery.

The interconnectivity of sound and space, materials, image, text, and generative systems use audio and electronic components, surface transducers, speakers, and assorted matter, materials, and objects for liveness. Listening to the multiple nodes of localized sound is a subjective and intersubjective engagement with sensoriality of sound as synesthetic experience. The becoming, beginning, undoing, and redoing of sound connects the listener to sounds of difference and differing and to language as a new symbolic space of subjective, objective, and collective relations. Sound, text, the senses, and cognition perform their becomings and beginnings, undone again.



Figure 3. Documentation of installation of sound, moving image, and text animations. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021. Thesis exhibition at McIntosh Gallery, London (2021). Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.



Figure 4. Documentation of installation details. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021. Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.

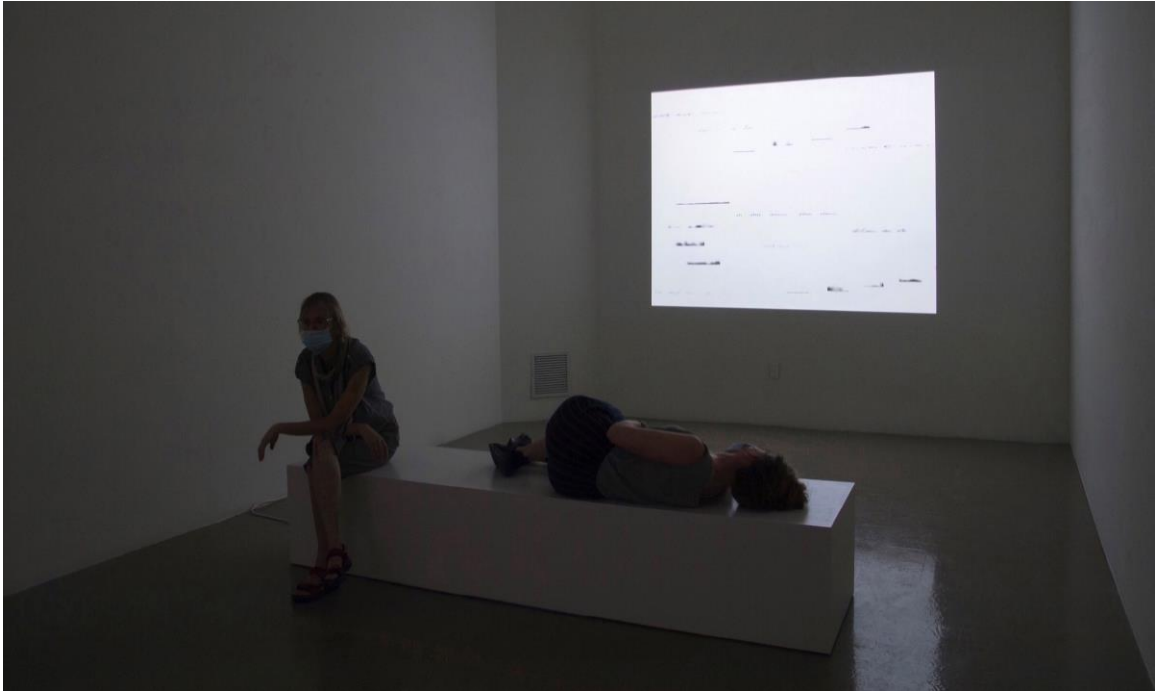


Figure 5. Documentation of projection and sound bench. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021. Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.

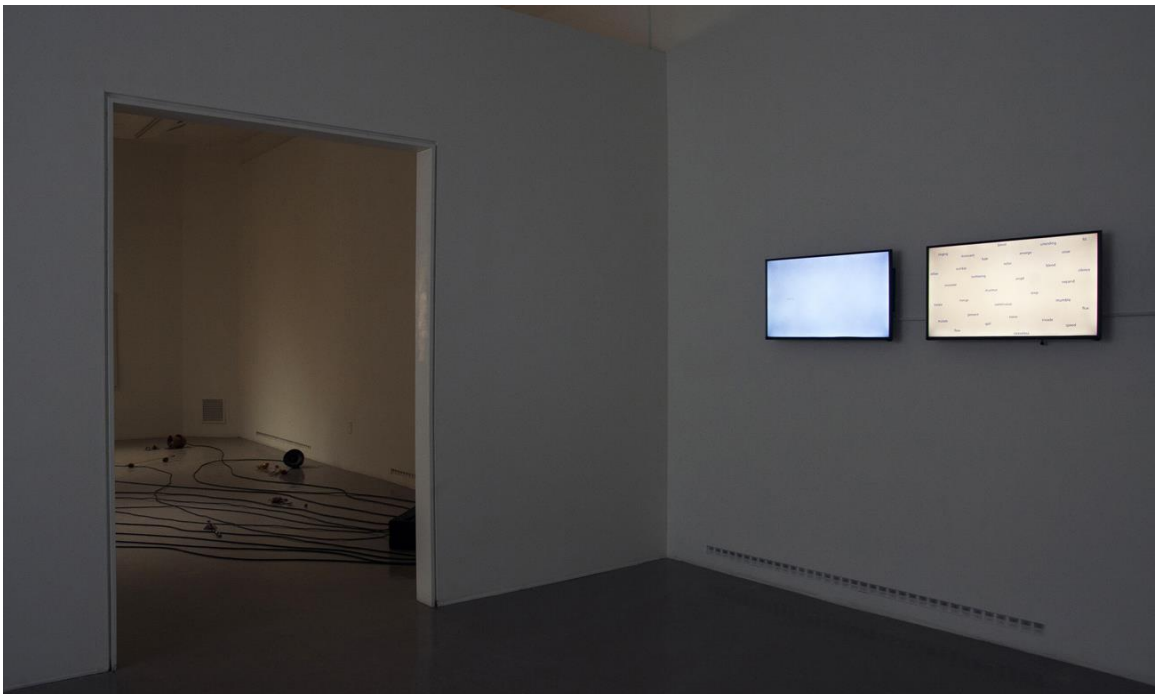


Figure 6. Documentation of video and installation details. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021. Image Credit: Ruth Skinner.

Link 2. Time-based Media: Video, Audio, and Website. *becoming again beginning undone*, 2021.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/581790457>. Courtesy of McIntosh Gallery.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/user-18693230/becomingagainbeginningundone>.

Website: <https://www.ellenmoffat.ca/becomingagainbeginningundone/>.

Chapter 2 . Sonic Sense

Christ Church Anglican, Saskatoon.⁷⁷

The concert started at midnight. Wanting to secure a sonic sweet spot, I arrived early. As more people drifted in, the pew began to feel uncomfortable. Approximately half an hour later, low frequency sounds became audible in the resonant space of the church; volume levels increased gradually, as a palpable, sensorial, tonal pulse. As I settled into listening to the electroacoustic sound, the physical discomfort of the wooden pew was gone but I sensed a slight tingling in my lower back.⁷⁸ This sensation spread to my sit bones, then to the soles of my feet, and up my shins. Sonic vibration was transmitted to my body through the air as well as the wooden pews and concrete floors as felt sensation. My body became an interface, a sound board, and a vibrating membrane. I heard the signal through my ears, pores, and body as audible and inaudible physical awareness. This was my introduction to the sound of electronic musician and composer, Tim Hecker.

transduce: conducting bodies

Hecker's sound floods the church, touching materials, surfaces, objects, and bodies directly and indirectly, causing solid materials and surfaces to vibrate, objects to resonate, and bodies to tingle and then tickle. The electronic sound unfolds viscerally in fluctuating sensorial waves of vibration, amplified by audio technology and the resonant acoustics of the church.⁷⁹ Physical contact between the oscillating signal and the body produces an embodied awareness

⁷⁷ The concert was part of ViveFest3 on April 1, 2011.

⁷⁸ Electroacoustic sound is a genre of composition and sound production that combines electronic and acoustic methods for sound works of art. Musique concrète, elektronische Musik, tape music of the mid-20th c. in Paris, Cologne and New York evolved into electronic music and computer music.

⁷⁹ For this concert, Hecker outputted audio signal on his computer through the PA system in the church to multiple speakers around the nave of the church. Email correspondence with audio engineer, Barrett Ross, April 17, 2021.

of becoming

felt sensation before being perceived cognitively as audio signal. The oscillating particles of air transduce materials, surfaces, and bodies, augmented by spatial and acoustic properties of the church. Barry Blesser and Linda Salter use the term ‘aural architecture’ as the relationality of sound and the real environment, such as the street, concert hall, or a jungle. The spatial elements of the environment, physical structure, or site mix with the sound event or occurrence. How we hear sound relates to various spatial elements of the site, resulting in what they call an “identifiable personality of the aural architecture.”⁸⁰ Each space has its own aural character. Sound is not isolated from its context. The audible or tactile sensation of sound corresponds to the speed and amplitude of the transmitted signal in relation to the resonant capacity of the architectural space. Pitch, speed, and amplitude affect audibility. High frequency tones are more audible and less tangible as felt sensation. Low frequency tones are less audible, but more visceral. Sound waves expand throughout space as real movement that occurs in time. Whether we are awake or asleep, we are immersed in the sensorial fluctuation of a sonic environment. The ubiquity, promiscuity, pervasive, performativity, and materiality of sound means we ‘hear’ sound throughout our bodies. Sound touches the body which feels itself being touched by sound.

transmute: body(h)ears

I do not recollect the precise moment of my awareness in the shift of sensation from a tingle to a tickle to a tone, making me wonder

when did *it* start,

the *it* in question being the body’s sensation of discomfort and the source of the sensation. In retrospect, the question of whether the sensation was caused by the woodenness of the pew or the materiality of Hecker’s sound augmented by the acoustics

⁸⁰ Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening: Experiencing Aural Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 2.

of the church is settled, but not the instant of this recognition as a sonic event. Initially, the sense was

like breath or a whisper

on the hairs of my arm that progressed slowly and temporally as felt sensation before becoming audible. The experience morphed into thinking about relations of sensation and signal, sonic materiality and immateriality, and heard and unheard sound. The memory of sensation becomes a question of whether the body hears an audible signal or actually feels the sonic fluctuation as physical vibration. Feeling *with* the body becomes hearing *through* the body as the tingle becomes a tickle then a tone, making me wonder

how a deaf person

might hear Hecker's sound.⁸¹ And this becomes a question of what 'hearing' sound means. At what point does physical sensation become recognized as a sonic signal? My question is how the body knows that the physical sensation is a sonic impulse rather than the wind, a cold breeze, or an earthquake. Is the understanding that the physical sensation—a tingling spine—is due to an audio signal rather than a pinched nerve an epiphonic moment? Perhaps, but what is of more interest is the process of perception. Recognition of the difference of the sensation between an imaginary, physiological, and sonic signal unfolds as relations of time, space, and the conditions of sound production.

This chapter approaches listening and experiential and sensorial dimensions of sound as relations between sound and space and bodies. The encounter of one physical presence (sound) with other physical presence (bodies) affirms our corporeal, intersubjective, and

⁸¹ The deaf Scottish percussionist Evelyn Glennie talks of hearing throughout her body – through her hands, arms, cheekbones, scalp, and feet, as well as her ears. She does not distinguish between hearing and feeling sound.

This might reflect her situation of losing her hearing as a child rather than being born deaf, meaning she has a memory of hearing. In addition, her capacity to hear is about 10%. Whether Glennie's body hears vibration as tone, vibration, or rhythm is a dangling question. Evelyn Glennie, *How to Truly Listen*, TED 2003. https://www.ted.com/talks/evelyn_glennie_how_to_truly_listen#t-804

spatial relations through direct contact and indirect influence. I consider sound, listening, silence, and the sonic subject

as a mix and remix of

ideas and thought

using stream of consciousness as a method of dialogic thinking that follows the flow of sound as a structure.⁸² These ideas set the stage for a sound art project by Marla Hlady (in collaboration with Eric Chenaux) and performative sound drawing-scores by Christine Sun Kim. My attention is to aesthetic, perceptual, and conceptual aspects of their work and differences in how they work with sound. The synesthetic dimension in these artists' projects augment the sensorial engagement with their work in different ways.

transverse: sound, sensing, and the senses

The senses and perception connect the lived body to the world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* starts with the body and consciousness of the human subject as lived relations within the world. His emphasis is on sight (visuality) and touch (the touch and the touched). He considers the visible and the seeing as a circle and the touched and the touching as a circle; the intersection of these separate circles allows for communication within and between bodies. For me, the image is of the overlapping circles of a Venn diagram, initially. "There is a circle of the touched and the touching, the touch takes hold of the touching; there is a circle of the visible and the seeing, the seeing is not without visible existence."⁸³ Merleau-Ponty proposes the reciprocity of visuality and the tactile: "there is even an inscription of the touching in the visible, of the seeing in the tangible – and the converse; there is finally a propagation of these exchanges to all bodies of the same type and of the same style which I see and touch – and this by virtue of the fundamental fission of segregation of the sentient and the sensible which, laterally,

⁸² My reference is to the stream of consciousness of Virginia Woolf's writing.

⁸³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 143.

makes the organs of my body communicate and founds transitivity from one body to another.”⁸⁴ His notion of the reciprocity of visuality and tactility suggests the Mobius strip as a form that enfolds back into itself.⁸⁵ Merleau-Ponty’s attention to the reversibility of the visible and tangible as an intercorporeal being as a “presumptive domain... extends further than the things I touch and see at present.”⁸⁶ Largely overlooked in Merleau-Ponty is sound. And yet, Merleau-Ponty writes of the body as

a “sonorous being”

that hears itself: “I hear my own vibration from within.”⁸⁷ This conception of the body affirms my experience in the church. His notion of intercorporeality has sonic potential beyond the voice and hearing. He suggests that the body is “like crystal, like metal and many other substances.”⁸⁸ Voegelin calls Merleau-Ponty’s perception ‘sonic,’ meaning it is free from the totalizing perspective of visuality on knowledge and experience.⁸⁹ For her, the intersubjectivity of sonic reality is “that it does not exist without my being in it and I in turn only exist in my complicity with it; and it is generative in that it is the sensory-motor process of listening: presently producing one’s honey-ness from one’s position of listening centrifugally in the world.”⁹⁰ In other words, listening is relational and social as intertwined relations of the situated listener to the sound occurrence. Before unpacking these ideas through sound artworks, I expand on Voegelin’s attention to the senses, listening, the subject, and intersubjectivity.

The senses with which we engage with the world shape perception and produce the sensory self. For Voegelin, perception is a recursive loop of the sense employed in

⁸⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 143.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Grosz explores the notion of the corporeality of the woman’s body and its relations to the world in *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*.

⁸⁶ In a note in the margin of the manuscript, Merleau-Ponty asks: “what are these adhesions compared with those of the voice and the hearing?”⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty’s note-to-self suggests his recognition of the capacity of sound as a sensible sentient. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 143.

⁸⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 144.

⁸⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 144.

⁸⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 10.

⁹⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 10.

perception, the impact of this perception on the perceiving body, and the way in which this perception produces the sensory self.⁹¹ The senses shape the perceiving subject as dynamic relations of perception and sense; we perceive phenomenon and objects through the senses.⁹² Voegelin argues that the preference given to visuality has ideological associations. The disconnection of the perceiving subject from the perceived object proposes certainty and stable identities of the subject and object. The distance and detachment of the viewer from what is seen is interpreted as objectivity and truth.⁹³ The reciprocal relations of touch and the touching affirm and privilege the material real. Ideologically, seeing and visuality align with rationality, certainty, and logic. By contrast,

sound disturbs certainty,

logic, proof, and the evidence

of seeing and visuality. The sensorial and the sonic turns contest the designation of sound—as well as smell, taste, and touch—to a secondary status.⁹⁴ Sound opens the sensorial engagement with the world as the non-sense of sense, meaning we do not give sense to experience but make sense out of experience from within it.⁹⁵ The fact that we perceive the world from within it means the perspectival is always incomplete. Merleau-Ponty's non-sense comes from the sensorial engagement with the world through the senses. He acknowledges that bodily knowledge and sensual experience precede intellectual and conscious knowledge.⁹⁶ The sensorial, perceptual unfolding of the

⁹¹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 3.

⁹² The senses are aesthetically and ideologically weighted; within Western thought, preference is given to visuality.

Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 3.

⁹³ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

⁹⁴ David Howes from the Centre for Sensory Studies at Concordia University, Montreal dates the sensory turn in history and anthropology to the 1980s. Interest in the senses expanded to visual culture, auditory culture (or sound studies), smell culture, taste culture, and the culture of touch. Adele Wessell and Donna Lee Brien. "Taste: A Media and Cultural View. *M/C Journal*, 17 No. 1 (2014): <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.795>

⁹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1964), x.

⁹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 53-54.

phenomenological subject listening in the concert in the church: the sonic sensation progresses as

continuous

transmission and transduction

of sonic vibration followed by a slow reveal of understanding. My immersion in sound and listening while being pulled into its fluctuating tonality and temporality is an engagement with the sonic sensation that connects me intersubjectively to the world. I make sense of the world from within it through inter/active listening to it. My listening starts with my body as a physical interface for the reception of sound generated by the artist, amplified by the space and audio technology, and received by me as listener within the collective, social space of the church. As a listener, I am immersed in the temporal materiality of sound in the shared social space of the concert event; my listening is from a subjective position. The sound is processed digitally, transmitted electronically, and received as acoustic sound. The experience of listening is an engagement with the interconnection of the processes and conditions of sound generation, digital technology, architectural space, and other bodies.

(in) transit: subjective sonic generative present

Voegelin's philosophy of sound art begins with the auditory object of "sound as sound itself"—not with the source of the sound – and the listener who is immersed in the auditory object which "sits in her ear."⁹⁷ Her attention to sound itself as its transience and temporality and to listening is grounded in the notion of sharing time and space with the sound object or sound event as a process that she calls 'involved participation' in contrast to the detached viewing position of the visual.⁹⁸ The listener is "intersubjectively constituted in perception, while producing the very thing he perceives, and both, the

⁹⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

⁹⁸ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

subject and the work thus generated concomitantly, are as transitory as each other.”⁹⁹ Her notion of ‘continual production’ with the sound event or object is a coincidence of perception and the production of perception by the listener in which both the subject and the sound work are equally transient.¹⁰⁰ Her proposal for listening is a method of exploration rather than a receptive mode; she calls it

“a mode of ‘walking’

through the soundscape/the sound work.”¹⁰¹ The temporal and transient aspect of continual participation of listening is “an interactivity, that produces and invents and demands of the listener a complicity and commitment that rethinks existing philosophies of perception.”¹⁰² The process involves stripping away assumptions and expectations about the heard in advance of an event so that the listener is receptive to the heard as material

in the now and with contingency

as an individual action.¹⁰³ As an action and interaction, listening is in the present. What the listener hears is “generative... subjective and continually, presently, now.”¹⁰⁴ The listener engages with the senses and the transience of an event as a subject in which the “drive to knowing... (is)...

always now, unfolding

⁹⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

¹⁰⁰ Voegelin borrows Adorno’s advice to not produce truth, but to let insights judge the question, and to approach enquiry as experimentations rather than ideology and truth. Her goal is not to explain experience but to develop a philosophy that experiences. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii-xiii.

¹⁰¹ Voegelin refers to Michel de Certeau’s differentiation between the desire for a gnostic drive from above as all-knowing, and the street view that results from walking. Listening, walking, and the soundscape also connect to the work of Hildegard Westerkamp. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 4.

¹⁰² Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

¹⁰³ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ The full quote is “What I hear is discovered not received, and this discovery is generative, a fantasy: always different and subjective and continually, presently now.” Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 4.

in the present bringing with it the uncertainty of a fleeting understanding.”¹⁰⁵ Listening in this way is about interpretation, not knowledge, as an “individual and contingent practice... complete in its subjective contingency and transience.”¹⁰⁶ The involved participation of the active listener connects the signal to communication. Voegelin situates the listener within space and a context; her focus is on experiential dimension of listening as a dynamic process that occurs in the present moment by the immersed subject through active engagement with/in the transience of sound. She starts with the experience of sound as a “temporal relationship” with “sound itself.” Voegelin brackets listening.¹⁰⁷ Her listener is the “aesthetic subject in sound [who] is defined by this fact of interaction with the auditory world... in the midst of its materiality, complicit with its production.”¹⁰⁸ Bracketing facilitates the dedicated attention to listening in the materiality of sound. The subject listens outwardly and inwardly while receiving the transmitted signal in its fluctuation.

transient: persistent

The transience of sound causes doubt. Sonic doubt resonates with the perceptual doubt of Cézanne in the process of his painting a landscape “as an emerging organism.”¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty writes about Cézanne’s doubt as questioning the premise of a single, habitual truth as a known rather than the emergence of being over time, apprehended through experience.¹¹⁰ Cézanne’s doubt is a creative question about authenticity in rendering *what* is seen as it actually *is* seen, his inquiry driven by primordial experience,

¹⁰⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ The phenomenological reduction of Edmund Husserl is a method for philosophical inquiry that used epoché or bracketing to suspend judgement about the objectivity of the world in order to focus on the analysis of experience. In sonic terms, this translates into the separation of the signal from its source. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/>.

¹⁰⁸ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 17.

¹¹⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 7.

not by conceptualization.¹¹¹ “Cézanne returns to just that primordial experience from which these notions are derived and in which they are inseparable.”¹¹² The doubt of sound connects to the intersubjectivity of listening as the unfolding of the creative process. The transience and ephemerality of sound and listening cause doubt about

what was heard.¹¹³

Voegelin connects listening as a critical motility to Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology as a process of doubt; “the critical listener himself is full of doubt about the heard, and doubtful in his complicity he needs to hear and hear again, to know himself as an intersubjective being in a sonic life-world.”¹¹⁴ Doubt about listening and the heard is caused by the fleeting presence and temporality of sound. Sound morphs as I listen, leading to a question about what sound I no longer can access, remember, and/or whether I imagined what I thought I heard. Voegelin proposes that the “phenomenological doubt of the listener about the heard and himself hearing it” is a given.¹¹⁵ This creates a predicament for the listener in that the relation of sound and doubt is a recursive loop of uncertainty and complicity. The listener produces what is heard as she listens to the transience of sound. Doubt refuses certainty. As a listener, I may not know the source of sound, but I hear its effect as affect,

here and now.

It is there; I hear it here. “I can perceive at a distance but that is a heard distance. The distance is what I hear here, not over-there. It does not signal a separation of objects or events but is the separation as perceived phenomenon.”¹¹⁶ Listening, hearing, sonic

¹¹¹ Merleau-Ponty states: “The painter who conceptualizes and seeks expression first misses the mystery – renewed every time we look at someone – of a person’s appearing in nature.” Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 16.

¹¹² Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, 16.

¹¹³ Voegelin writes about Merleau-Ponty’s doubt about the heard as the difference between objectivity and subjectivity Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 10.

¹¹⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 10.

¹¹⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

¹¹⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

doubt, and the sonic subject are “in the midst of the materiality of sound and complicit to its production.”¹¹⁷ For Voegelin, listening and hearing are generated and generative and subjective and intersubjective.

What and how

sonic doubt affects listening and hearing connects to the fluctuating present and transience of sound. Listening as exploration and discovery—including sonic doubt and sound as sound, sensation, and sense-making without an expectation for meaning—affirms the non-sense of sound in itself. Listening starts but does not stop with the experiential.

transform: relationality

Voegelin extends Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological doubt as the non-sense of sense to sound and sonic perception. I connect her sonic perception to the listening subject in the concert in the church, immersed in the transient non-sense of sound and subjective sense-making as unfolding relations of bodies and sonic materiality as a way

of being-in-the-world.

Feminist phenomenology extends Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology as embodied experience and the situated body to the interrelationality of all beings in the world while critiquing its androcentrism.¹¹⁸ Rather than joining the argument of the gender-bias of phenomenology, my attention to women sound artists includes questions of embodiment, sexuality, and sonic sensibility. The inaudible sensation of embodied experience as physical pulsation challenges certainty about the presence of sound. Both inaudible and audible aspects of sound expand perception of the sonic as vibration. Intertwining of tactile sensation and audible signal brings the listening subject back

¹¹⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 5.

¹¹⁸ Silvia Stoller gives a detailed summary of phenomenology within feminist theory. Silvia Stoller, “What is Feminist Phenomenology? Looking Backwards and Forwards Into the Future,” in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 328-354.

to the body and the experiential.

Nina Sun Eidsheim writes about vibration as the transmission and transduction of energy that transforms through pulsation through and across materials as a dynamic relation to material qualities and contexts.¹¹⁹ Her attention is to music as transferable energy using vibration as a figure of sound that transforms through its relations to the materials and its context in a dynamic process. She employs vibration to think through the distribution and communication beyond physical borders. This conception of sound supports the experiential embodiment of the subject in the church and the immediacy of sound, augmented by the material elements, spatial features, and aural architecture of the church as relations. The dynamic materiality of these elements affirms the subjectivity of experience and the intersubjectivity of relations as sonic perception.

transcend: descend

I am a sonic subject in Hecker's concert within the church, touched by and touching the sound that unfolds and enfolds me in its fluctuation. My body absorbs the materiality of sonic energy-matter that permeates solid materials, interfaces, and the air, felt as audible and tactile sensation. The physicality of sonic vibration caresses my skin, feet, and lips. Sound enters my body through my ear canals, nostrils, mouth, pores, butt, skin, and bones. My body morphs. The acoustic waves soar and descend throughout the architectural space of the church, taking my becoming body with them on a sonic flight of fantasy. The concert ends. My bubble deflates. I return to the pew,

transformed by the present

now past

sonic materiality and immateriality of electronic sound in the resonant architecture of the church. The audible and inaudible signal and sensation of this virtual sonic flight occur

¹¹⁹ Nina Sun Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 16.

within the space of its generation and reception. The question of how the sound is more than the experiential connects the phenomenological with the materiality of sound. If sound has the capacity for subjective transformation, what is its potential for the social body of the collective? To approach this, I return to the transience and materiality of sound.

transgress: without borders

The transitory character of sound evades containment. Sound is unbound in its capacity for spatial expansion, motility, and mobility. Sound moves through space freely, it bends around corners, crosses borders without permission, and leaks through solid surfaces. The materiality of sound challenges conceptualization: sound is becoming. The conceptualization of sound

‘as if’

it is nomadic

affirms its transience and mobility. Rosi Braidotti’s nomadic consciousness blurs boundaries and ways of thinking by combining mobility, coherence, and contingency with attention to feminist postmodernism. Her notion of the nomadic subject converges with the materiality of sound through nomadic consciousness as “an acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries. It is the intense desire

to go on trespassing,

transgressing.”¹²⁰ As a figure of contemporary subjectivity, the nomad is an intensive, multiple entity. Rather than being a form, the nomad is a site of multiple connections. “S/he is embodied, and therefore cultural; as an artifact, s/he is a technological compound of human and post-human; s/he is complex, endowed with multiple capacities for interconnectedness in the impersonal mode... S/he is abstract and perfectly, operationally

¹²⁰ Braidotti builds on Donna Haraway’s recognition of the need to be located somewhere to make statements of general value. This translates to a sense of belonging. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

real.”¹²¹ Braidotti’s feminist nomadic project connects identity, subjectivity, and power with respect to the “multiple consciousness of difference” of the “multi-differentiated and situated perspective.”¹²² The nomadic subject is a performative image that allows for a blurring of boundaries and rethinking categories.

The feminist nomadic project rethinks dualisms from a feminist new materialist position of transversality with attention to the morphology of change and to matter. This includes the interconnectivity of human and non-human relations, social transformation, and subjective and intersubjective relations. The concept of

‘as if’ as

a quality of interconnectedness

refers to Deleuze’s deterritorialization as a removal of a centre, away from hegemony.¹²³

Braidotti thinks about change, transformation, and living transitions through historicity, agency, and the desire for change. While an exploration of unconscious structures is not part of this research, the interconnection of identity, subjectivity, and power with attention to sexual difference is relevant.¹²⁴ The notion of contingency, not fixity, connects the materiality of sound, listening, and sexuality. The feminine sonic rethinks the linearity of logocentric thought and power structures through nonlinearity, intersubjectivity, and transitioning. For Braidotti, the task and question for the nomad is “how to restore a sense of intersubjectivity that would allow for the recognition

of differences to create

¹²¹ The quotation is edited for its relevance to my research. Edited out is: “S/he is a cyborg, but equipped also with a consciousness. She is Irigaray’s ‘muscular,’ or ‘divine,’ but endowed with a multicultural perspective.” Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

¹²² Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

¹²³ Braidotti calls the nomadic subject a myth, or a political fiction. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 4.

¹²⁴ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

a new kind of bonding in an inclusive (i.e., nonexclusionary) manner.”¹²⁵ Multiplicity recognizes the “complexity of the semiotic and material conditions in which women operate.”¹²⁶ She considers differences in terms of dialects, jargons, and languages. The difference of nomadic thinking (and the nomadic subject) connects to sound through materiality, tonality, rhythm, and fluctuation.¹²⁷ Sound cannot be contained. It bleeds
 beyond borders.

The non-exclusionary bonding of Braidotti’s intersubjectivity expands the communicative potential of listening in a collective sense with a recognition of difference. For me, the concept of the subject as multiple multiplies into the multiplicity of listening as active participation to listen to cultural difference, namely Indigenous cultures. Dylan Robinson calls for a non-totalizing conception of “different listening positionalities” to address “racialized and anti-colonial listening.”¹²⁸ His proposal for listening is as an ecology “in which we are not only listening but listened to.”¹²⁹ In *Hungry Listening*, he presents the Indigenous perspective on cultural, spiritual, and ancestral relations to the land, spirits, and cultural objects in contrast to settler-colonial attitudes and cultural institutions.¹³⁰ He positions Indigenous listening within the sensory domain of living forces of human and nonhuman: sound, listening, and intersubjectivity include trees, rivers, and mountains as kin.¹³¹ The Indigenous world view expands the sense of listening to human/nonhuman relations by trespassing borders of the colonial legacy and inheritance of extractive mentalities.

¹²⁵ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

¹²⁶ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 36.

¹²⁷ Braidotti’s nomadic consciousness does not include sound. Her focus is the materiality of bodies, relations, and patriarchal structures and their ideological assumptions.

¹²⁸ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 37.

¹²⁹ Robinson presents numerous instances of settler-colonial misunderstandings of Indigenous culture and knowledge of the interconnectivity of all living forces and matter. He cites Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* as an exception. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 98.

¹³⁰ Dylan Robinson reveals the energy of cultural belongings such as masks and ceremonial objects; they are living beings or ancestors that must be cared for. It is not simply an artifact to be stored in a museum. Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 86-87.

¹³¹ Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 98.

The intersection of Braidotti's interconnectivity with Voegelin's listening brings the experiential, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity of the sonic subject in sound to the collective space of transgression, becoming, and difference. The juncture of feminist new materialism and the philosophy of sound art offers a becoming node of bodies, listening in inter/active engagement with sound: what is heard is generated by the listener in relation to the sound heard through invention and sense-making.¹³² To explore this intersection, I present an interactive sound sculpture/instrument of sound/noise by Marla Hlady. In engaging with this work, the listening subject(s) is nomadic and transitioning in her intersubjective relations with the world of the sound artwork. She generates sound as she listens to it. The listener(s) is immersed in sound bodily and spatially as sound unfolds in time. The unfolding of sound and the commitment of the listener to this unfolding opens the work to sense, subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and co-authorship.

Hlady's work extends the trajectory of noise practices of nonmusical sound and silence and its precursors.¹³³ Key moments in this pre-sound art trajectory include: Luigi Russolo's art of noises and noise instruments (*intonarumori*) of the early 20th c.;¹³⁴ Jacques Attali's noise as nonsense that Cox describes as "the absence of sense, interference with sense, or the proliferation of sense beyond the point of intelligibility;"¹³⁵ and Pierre Schaeffer's creation of "concrete" sounds using mechanical methods to process sound recordings into sound "in-itself-ness" as sound phenomenon in 1948.¹³⁶ John Cage's active listening shifted the listener's ear away from music as organized sound toward background noise as quotidian sound. Hlady's work connects to and exceeds these influences; her work is anchored firmly in contemporary sound art practices.

¹³² Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 5-6.

¹³³ Thomas Edison's phonograph enabled the recording and reproduction of live sounds such as speech and music. While the invention of the phonograph predates sound art by approximately 100 years, Cox connects Edison invention to the trajectory of sound art. Christoph Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 2.

¹³⁴ There is discrepancy in the spelling of the term: both *intonarumori* and *intonorumori* are used within Cox's text. Christoph Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 120-122.

¹³⁵ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 46.

¹³⁶ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 122.

transpose: the jig. the foot. the stage.

Sonic thuddings of equal-measure catch my ear. I follow the drone to its source—a plywood crate with two stainless-steel soundballs on stands.¹³⁷ The crate is functional and contained, like a shipping crate. Audio cables lead toward or away from it.

A clue.

I pick up a metal sphere, rotate it by chance, and hear sound.

Evidence.

The work presents a predicament and a puzzle of how to and of what does what. I'm in my head. Two children scramble onto the stage; each one picks up a sphere and turns it vertically and spatially.

A demonstration.

Their actions are my instructions.

Play.

Soundball (Dancehauling) is an interactive kinetic-sound work by Hlady in collaboration with Eric Chenaux.¹³⁸ It is an interactive, performative sound sculpture.¹³⁹ In stepping onto the plywood stage, sound is transduced to the performer's body through their skin, muscles, and bones immediately. The physical vibration seeps through the soles of feet,

¹³⁷ The crate doubles as performance stage and shipping container. The stainless-steel spheres are placed in custom soundball stands. Contained within these units (the sound stage and the spheres) are technological components that include surface resonating speakers, amplifiers, microprocessor, and accelerometers to output the sound. For the user-visitor, these elements are invisible. The mechanical elements of the sound generation are hidden. The user employs these interfaces as a sound instrument without knowledge of the technical behind-the-scenes devices and systems that enable the sound.

<https://www.marlahlady.com/sculpture/Soundballcrateamp.html>.

¹³⁸ *Soundball (Dancehauling)* was developed as a collaboration by Marla Hlady with musician Eric Chenaux in 2013. The sculptural element is Hlady's work; the sound was a collaboration by the two artists. Correspondence with Hlady, July 22, 2020.

¹³⁹ The artist statement invites the visitor to handle the resonator balls as a way to play with sound, or "to touch, sit or stand on the crate."

progressing up calves, shins, and back. The body tingles. The corporeal sensation and experiential embodiment of the sonic pulse override any need for cognitive understanding or technical explanation. Experientially, the work evokes the sensation of noise as non-sense.

Facts:

the surfaces of stainless-steel soundballs reflect the surrounding space in miniature; a small, warped body of the user as performer is situated in an equally distorted little world of architectural curvature. The reflected image locates the user-performer in the social space of the gallery. Rotating the spheres modifies the audio recordings—foot beats and guitar bowings—in speed and pitch. The user-performer experiments with actions, angles, and spatial orientation of the spheres with attention to the sonic outcomes.¹⁴⁰ Being on the crate-stage-amplifier-resonating chamber excites the

synesthetic intermingling of

of sound heard and sound felt as reciprocal relations of the body, movement, and sensation. Sound vibrates the user-performer who manipulates the sphere to alter the signal, listening closely to the shifting tones as relations of her bodily actions and the spatial orientation of the spheres. The user-performer is simultaneously a conductor, creator, and electronic conduit. These relations are subjective, intersubjective, corporeal, intercorporeal, and temporal. Sound generation is a mix of

present and absent bodies and intermingling

sonic materiality as generative sound. The user-performer engages with *Soundball (Dancehauling)* through listening, touch, and direct bodily interaction with the user interface. The hand-held controllers—the soundballs—connect to the subject-object

¹⁴⁰ The audio recordings refer to traditional dance music (jigs, reels, slipjigs or hornpipes) from Irish, Scottish, and English traditional music wherein the musician uses his/her beating foot to ground the often sinuous or meandering melody as a rhythmic aid for the dancer. The performance/recording of both the foot beat (Hlady) and the bowed guitar (Chenau) were made independently.

relations of Merleau-Ponty's intertwining of touch and the touching, without the fleshiness of bodies. The relation includes actions and displacement of felt sensation—from the hand-held spheres to the vibrating stage—and audible sound. The work evokes Merleau-Ponty's notion of being-honeyed as the sticky viscosity that adheres to and adopts the form of its host with residual sonic presence or as affect.¹⁴¹

However,

the analogy does not work fully. Unlike the phenomenological intertwining, there is no distance with the sonic; the listener is immersed within its fluctuation. The ephemerality and transience and here-and-nowness of sound changes as the listener listens to it. Sound does not become an object; it calls the object into question.¹⁴² Interaction with the physical interfaces—objects—produces sound which sounds the subject as a reciprocal relation of listening, sensation, and sound generation in which

the subject bends with sound

that bends the subject

continuously and variably in its uncontainable and unstoppable fluctuation and transformation. There is no stability to this experience. The sensorial experience of the work resonates with Hecker's sound in the church. In Hlady's work, the user-performer is multiple: she is performer, composer, listener, and sonic subject with agency to generate sound through direct, physical engagement with the spheres, while listening to and sensing-feeling the sound physically as sensation. Spending time with the work is a condition for this unfolding. The stage is a collective, social space with material evidence of its previous users. The presence of past performers is marked by visual and auditory

¹⁴¹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 10.

¹⁴² I am not contesting the 'sound object' of Pierre Schaeffer, but the 'object' as a stable form. Hlady's objects (the soundballs) are part of the instrumental interface of *Soundball (Dancehauling)*; they function as controllers for sound generation and its manipulation. The sound in Hlady's work is modified through interactions with the soundballs. The sound is not static or fixed.

residue–footprint traces on the stage and sonic settings of the sound balls. The user-performer is situated

in the presence and difference of

others, affirming the intersubjective, intercorporeal, temporal, and social elements of the work. Backtracking or undoing the settings of the previous user is not an option. Each new user-performer inherits the settings of previous user as her starting point and situation.¹⁴³ The absence of a reset button that would enable a return to zero state settings in order to begin again is an awkward and provocative aspect of the user interface. As a user-performer, my inability to author the sonic composition challenged my desire to control the sonic outcomes. Inheriting the settings of previous user-performer confirms the entangled reality of our quotidian intersubjective relations.

The invitation and capacity to manipulate sound recordings in Hlady's work evoke the sound objects (*objets sonores*) and reduced listening (*ecouté réduite*) of Pierre Schaeffer. His *musique concrète* was an experimental technique using audio recordings as raw material and electronic processes to create acousmatic music as a way to renew listening.¹⁴⁴ His aim was for listeners to attend to sounds in themselves through concentrated listening as a form of phenomenological bracketing.¹⁴⁵ Schaeffer's sound object is both an acoustic action and an intention of listening. As an action, the sound object transforms the audio recording of the object used to make a sound (a kettle, a train). As an intention of listening, detachment of the sound from its sonic origin meant sound could be listened to in-itself as phenomenon. Cox writes of Schaeffer's intention "to dispense with musical drama and meaning in order 'to isolate the in-itself-ness of the sound phenomenon' and subordinate musical form to sonic matter."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Without having full control of the audio output, the work becomes less of an instrument and more of a sonic experience.

¹⁴⁴ Schaeffer's separation of sounds from their source also connected the acousmatics of Pythagoras and the technologies of the radio and phonograph.

¹⁴⁵ Pierre Schaeffer, "Acousmatics" in *Audio Culture: Readings in Modern Music*, ed. Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004), 76.

¹⁴⁶ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 122.

The disassociation of sound from its source—the instrument—unsettled musical convention and conditioning and offered another way of listening. The objet sonore emphasized sonic perception without revealing the source of the sound. It is an acoustic signal without a recognizable source such as a violin or an instrument.¹⁴⁷ By disassociating seeing and hearing, sound is acousmatic: it is sound itself. What is heard is that which the listener hears. The listener's attention is directed toward the sound and to perception of the sound. For Schaeffer, the source of a sound as objective fact was less important than the sound itself. The objet sonore presents rather than represents sound, meaning the listener

listens to sounds as sound

“without any aim other than that of hearing them better, in order to be able to describe them through an analysis of the content of our perceptions.”¹⁴⁸

Soundball (Dancehauling) has affinity to the sound object of Schaeffer. Sound has an existence that is independent from its source and transforms in time. Sound is generated for itself using technological means to modify or transform sound.¹⁴⁹ Relations between sound generation, listening, and embodied sensation unfold through an engagement with the work. Authorship is entangled. The public/performer manipulates the sound in real time to create new objets sonores that morph with each new gesture and orientation of the spheres spatially, her attention directed to the body-sonic-senses as the visceral sonic sensation of sonic materiality, listening, feeling, and sensing sound for itself in the company of others. The public/performer as subject produces and is produced in a

generative process of sounding and listening

¹⁴⁷ Schaeffer, “Acousmatics,” 79.

¹⁴⁸ Schaeffer, “Acousmatics,” 78.

¹⁴⁹ With the exception of audio cables and spherical soundballs which contain electronic controller devices to modify the audio signal in real time, the audio technology that drives *Soundball (Dancehauling)* is hidden within the sound stage/traveling crate. The invisibility of the technological gear privileges the public presentation of the work as an interactive interface. It also presents sound as acousmatic sound without a visible source. The focus on the sound in itself emphasizes the instrumental aspect of the work without revealing its mechanical elements.

as reciprocal relations. The listening body simultaneously listens to and performs new objects sonores through exploration and experimentation of body actions and movement as fluctuating relations of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity. The body listens to the in-itself-ness of the objects sonores from her subjective position with contingency. The listener and sound produce what is heard and felt at that moment of listening while maintaining their difference.¹⁵⁰

transcribe: sounding / silence

Until now, my focus on phenomenological, sensorial, subjective, and intersubjective aspects of sound and listening has leaned toward audible sound, a bias that needs correction. Jim Drobnick proposed the “sonic turn” to recognize the proliferation and diversity of sonic practices in the late 20th c. in terms of disciplinary range and theorization. “To postulate a sonic turn, however, is more than just a matter of exchanging one trope, one sense modality, for another. Sound bears a number of distinctive qualities, not only a temporal, dissipative dimension, but also an inherent performative and a social orientation.”¹⁵¹ The shift in emphasis to include the non-visual senses is an acknowledgement of the multiple modalities and sensoriality of perception and experience. This brings me back to the question of

how a deaf person might ‘hear’

sound. Hearing connects vibration, perception, the senses, and embodied experience to sound and silence as relations. To explore this question, I listen to and look at sound artist Christine Sun Kim for whom:

¹⁵⁰ Voegelin refers to Adorno’s distinction of the subject from the object. The being (subject) meets the thing (object) in reciprocal and equivalent relations, with difference. Subjectivity and objectivity are constituted through each other without giving up their own status. The empirical subject is not transcendental; it is formless, for itself, and outside the social exchange. Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 14-15.

¹⁵¹ Jim Drobnick, *Aural Cultures*, 10.

“to think about sound is to think about silence.”¹⁵²

Focusing on the notion of silence in Kim’s work runs a risk of misrepresenting her sound art practice which spans drawing, performance, and installation, including very loud sound.¹⁵³ My impulse is rhetorical rather than literal, motivated by objective, conceptual, and subjective questions to explore her perception and conceptualization of sound. I start with her situated reality as a woman who experiences sound from a position of silence. Kim’s silence is not the musical silence of John Cage, but the physiological silence of a person who hears in a synesthetic sense.¹⁵⁴ Kim’s perception of sound involves hearing as seeing and movement.¹⁵⁵ Her experience of sound and hearing through multiple senses affirms the complexity of sound as a phenomenon and ways that we perceive sound. Andra McCartney proposes that “hearing is done not only with the ears,

but with every fibre of our beings

as vibrations of sound move into our bodies. Sound touches us inside and out.”¹⁵⁶

Eidsheim argues that vibration connects with how we forge our relations to one another.¹⁵⁷ Éliane Radigue speaks of listening as a “mode of corporeal perception to the extent that we have an auditory nerve” and of

¹⁵² *Exploring the Sound of Silence With Christine Sun Kim*, 2016.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FI5Z_aw3Fc.

¹⁵³ In a performance at the Frieze Live 2016 in London, Kim was asked to keep the volume levels down in order to not disturb other vendors and potential buyers. Philomena Epps, “The Politics of Sound: An Interview with Christine Sun Kim,” *Art in America*, Oct 6, 2016. <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/interviews/the-politics-of-sound-an-interview-with-christine-sun-kim-56459/>.

¹⁵⁴ Voegelin argues that Cage’s musical silence asks questions about musical materiality, his attention to sound as music, not sound as sound. For her, this work is not about sounds of the everyday, but about the conventions of music. She argues that Cage brought silence into the concert hall as an extra musical sound concept not as sonic silence. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 80-81.

¹⁵⁵ In a Ted talk, Kim states “In Deaf culture, movement is equivalent to sound.” Sarah Mayberry Scott, “Re-orienting Sound Studies’ Aural Fixation: Christine Sun Kim’s ‘Subjective Loudness,’” *Sounding Out*, June 5, 2017, <https://soundstudiesblog.com/2017/06/05/re-orienting-sound-studies-aural-fixation-christine-sun-kims/>.

¹⁵⁶ Andra McCartney, “Soundscape Works, Listening, and The Touch of Sound,” in *Aural Cultures*, ed. Jim Drobnick (Toronto, ON: YYZ Books, 2004), 179.

¹⁵⁷ Eidsheim, *Sensing Sound*, 16.

the skull as a resonant chamber

that allows the Deaf to hear from their interior.¹⁵⁸ The extension of the notion of listening by Joanne Bristol as “touching listening” refers to embodied practices by non-Indigenous artists who situate their work in relation to the land.¹⁵⁹ Her conceptualization of listening expands the notion of hearing in connection to social and relational practices. This offers a bridge to Jennifer Fischer’s haptic perception as the sensorial awareness beyond the body and the boundaries of the skin’s surfaces as both proximal and distal perception.¹⁶⁰ This expansion of perception leads me back to my original question of “how a deaf person might hear sound?” to “how the body hears, sees, or is touched by sound?”¹⁶¹ The question relates to perception, the senses, navigation, and listening.

The impulse driving this question is my/the situatedness as/of a hearing woman with (my) assumptions about hearing, listening, and differences in hearing and listening. My question relates to navigation, perception, and being in the world from a gendered position. It intersects with Anne Carson’s question of “how our assumptions about gender affect the way we hear sounds?” I rotate Carson’s question to ask what assumptions we/I bring to sonic perception? This transposes the question into how our assumptions about hearing affect how we perceive

(with) our differences

and how differences in our perception

are translated into artistic practice? My listening is drawn to spatial, material, and durational aspects of sound and the awareness of my body as a sensor that picks up sonic

¹⁵⁸ Julia Eckhardt, *Eliane Radigue: Intermediary Spaces*, (Brussels: umland editions, 2019), 47.

¹⁵⁹ In reviewing works by Kristin Nelsen and Barbra Meneley, Joanne Bristol contextualizes their artistic approaches and their recognition of colonial conditions through which they address and access the land. Joanne Bristol, “touching listening,” *Blackflash*, Volume 36 Issue 2 (2019), 44-50.

¹⁶⁰ Jennifer Fischer, “Relational Sense: Towards A Haptic Aesthetic,” *Parachute, revue d’art contemporain*, July, August, September (1997), 6.

¹⁶¹ A photograph in Blesser and Salter’s *Spaces Speak* is of three blind cyclists riding on a dirt path using a form of echolocation for navigation. Despite the explanation, their capacity to complete this activity is astounding. Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, *Spaces Speak*, 40.

vibration as tactile sensation. This leads to a question about audible signal and its spatial location and whether the body can sense the spatial position of vibration?¹⁶²

Sonic vibration is felt as tactile sensation, seen as physical activity, or heard as audible signal. Low frequency sound may be heard, felt, or seen; this means the signal is accessible by the ear, touch, or sight. The body knows, hears, and feels sound as oscillating air waves that affirm the multi-sensoriality of sonic perception. Kim connects sound and ASL to movement. “In deaf culture, movement is equivalent to sound.”¹⁶³

This perception extends to her conceptualization of vibration and movement as sound.¹⁶⁴ Her conceptualization of sound as movement evokes affective hearing of haptic perception. She sees sound through its movement. Her hand-drawn notations of sound transcribe sonic events into visual marks as an open score for interpretation without tonal range for guidance. As transcriptions, her visual-touching of sound is haptic in its orientation. This question becomes how/whether differences in hearing affect what is heard. To explore these questions, I consider Kim’s drawing series *The Sound of –*. Silence is Kim’s acoustic reality. She explores the materiality of sound and silence in a conceptual art practice that shifts

how the viewer-listener, see-hears

sound in translation. In presenting the experience of sound of a deaf artist rather than the experience of deafness, she challenges boundaries and assumptions about hearing.¹⁶⁵ She believes that sound does not require a physical encounter with an audible signal for the

¹⁶² A sound engineer with whom I worked on several projects is legally blind. In mixing an eight-channel sound installation of mine in situ, he listened to the work spatially; he perceived sound as localized sonic columns. Max Neuhaus considers his sound drawings as “ways of speaking” and as “statement, indicators and tracings” of “invisible” sound works. His sound drawings are interpretations of sound in architectural space; they are “manifestations” of ideas and thought. *Max Neuhaus, Drawings: Sound works*, Volume II (Osfieldern: Cantz Verlag, 1994), 5 & 24.

¹⁶³ Scott, “Re-orienting Sound Studies’ Aural Fixation.”

¹⁶⁴ Scott, “Re-orienting Sound Studies’ Aural Fixation.”

¹⁶⁵ Kim’s sound art includes sound installation, collaborative performance, and drawing-scores. My attention to her drawing-scores is supported by on-line interviews and presentations.

viewer to understand the work as sound.¹⁶⁶ Kim attributes her lived experience of sound as providing her with an understanding to “see things in ways that others cannot” with “an extra ability to see things in ways that others couldn’t.”¹⁶⁷ She aims to set up an experience of hearing for the listener to “make their hearing unfamiliar as if they were... hearing for the first time.”¹⁶⁸

The sound in Kim’s drawings is muted, raising a question of what we are listening to? Her notational drawings are elemental, hand-drawn gestures that transcribe quotidian events—church bells, pedestrian activity, and street traffic—as visual marks of sonic events.¹⁶⁹ The materiality and physicality of these body-sized drawings are indexical to sonic events and to her body, without revealing their source; in this way, they are for themselves. The repeated visual marks re/present sound without measure, suggesting the passage of time, but not duration, tone, tempo, or event. In listening to her scores, I translate their code into sound. The drawing series, *The Sound of* –, is a response to the discrepancy between the duration of dialogue in film as an act and its text caption, resulting in her reading the film rather than watching it, leading her to a question of

“how non-sounds might be captured.”¹⁷⁰

The drawings are drifting rows of imperfectly repeated symbols—p, f, and sfz—that slide, bend, and blur in their orientation, visual articulation, and scale, refusing to adhere to the invisible modernist grid.¹⁷¹ The code for these performance-drawing of sound are symbols from musical notation:

¹⁶⁶ *Exploring the Sound of Silence With Christine Sun Kim*, 2016.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FI5Z_aw3Fc.

¹⁶⁷ Allison Weisberg in *Exploring the Sound of Silence With Christine Sun Kim*, 2016.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FI5Z_aw3Fc.

¹⁶⁸ Kim in *Exploring the Sound of Silence*.

¹⁶⁹ *Christine Sun Kim: The World is Sound*, (The Rubin Museum of Art), June 27, 2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vU4TCKxZlc>.

¹⁷⁰ The film was, *Kumiko, The Treasure Hunter* by David Zellner (2015). Examples of these captions are “the sound of rainfall cascading against the window pane” and “the sound of a pencil on a notepad.” *Christine Sun Kim: The World is Sound*.

¹⁷¹ The works on paper (4’ x 4’) are framed. A selection of her drawings was exhibited in *Silence, Pressure, Noise*, 2017 at the McIntosh Gallery, London, curated by Vicky Moufawad-Paul. The curatorial inquiry

p = piano (soft)

f = forte (loud)

sfz = sforzando (forced or abrupt)

The titles add a conceptual and musical code for the performative sound-drawing. The repetition of *p* in *The Sound of Obsession* performs an obsessive need for silence, the gradual compression of letters and their decreasing size quickening the obsession. For instance, smudging the *p* is its suffocation.¹⁷² In *The Sound of Passing Time*, volume levels are loud or forte. The code is *f*. Her multiplication of the symbol means increased tempo.¹⁷³ The drawings suggest the muted sound of notation, concrete poetry, or encryption. The graphic marks are an absent presence or a present absence—of unheard sonic events, ambient sound, actions, and interactions of varying duration—of the artist’s body. The imperfect transcriptions bring the artist’s absence to the visible present in sound-drawing-scores that mark time and sound without disclosure. They invite the listener to listen to their inaudible temporality through invention of a soundscape of unspecified duration.¹⁷⁴ Their repetition resonates with the continuous present in which

the same becomes different

and logic is suspended

as language for-itself

brought together the subjectivity and translations of sound with personal histories and the hearing experience, connecting the materiality of sound and aurality to the textual and sculptural, and meanings and memories.

¹⁷² *Christine Sun Kim: The World is Sound*.

¹⁷³ In musical terms, the doubling of the symbols is code for increased volume, not speed.

¹⁷⁴ As text works, the drawings have affinity to the phonetic poems of Dadaist poets Raoul Hausman and Kurt Schwitters, the concrete poetry of Bill Bissett and Henri Chopin, and the experimental graphical notations of experimental modernist musicians and composers. This interpretation invites vocal performance.

plays with meaning.¹⁷⁵ These works function as scores, or as stand-alone drawings. The materiality of Kim's silence with the imaginary of their sound invites an interpretative performance in which tempo, duration, rhythm, and tonality as

extended, percussive, crescendo, or decrescendo,

quotidian events, musique concrète, noise, or electronic sound

perform their original timeframe as a temporal structure. As a score, the materiality of their eventness might be performed through signing, translation, or kinetic sonic actions. The score is a trace of sound presented in silence. Sound is made visual. Here, sound is imagined through visual marks of a past sonic events, now silent. Voegelin writes about silence

as the beginning of listening,

rather than the absence of

sound. "In silence I comprehend physically, the idea of intersubjective listening: I am in the soundscape through my listening to it and in turn the soundscape is what I listen to, perpetually in the present."¹⁷⁶ The silence of Kim's drawings heightens an awareness of the senses, sensing, and non-sense of sound and assumptions about the sonic. Kim's silence questions how we come to know sound with the body and whose perception of sound is recognized. It affirms that perception comes through the experience of the situated body as an embodied subject, grounded in its engagement with the world through relations materiality, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity.

¹⁷⁵ The term 'continuous present' is from Gertrude Stein's "Composition as Explanation," written in 1925-26. Gertrude Stein, "Composition as Explanation,"

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69481/composition-as-explanation>.

¹⁷⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

Interstice Three: Artwork

A Little Piece of String, (2018)

Remai Modern, Saskatoon (November 2, 2018 - January 6, 2019)

Gertrude Stein's literary text *Tender Buttons* performs everyday objects in order to shift the stability of form and meaning. Inspired by her language experiments, *A Little Piece of String* uses signal transfer, everyday materials, and objects to produce kinetic-sonic outcomes using an algorithm for non-linear signal generation in an evolving composition of small sounds, with repetition and variation as difference. The listener engages with sound through active listening as co-production of the work.

A Little Piece of String explores and exploits ordinary objects and materials using their everyday recognition and their acoustic potential to shift how we might understand them as meaning and as small sound. The relationship of the listener to changing sounds decentres expectation by opening up experience and meaning as an encounter with new possibilities. Small sounds confirm listening as (inter)active engagement with sound. Listening to small sounds involves the listener in the production of meaning as subjective and intersubjective engagement, including uncertainty, becoming, and the potential for transformation. The sound artwork offers a symbolic space of collective difference and becoming social-spatial relations of multiple soundings.

At the opening reception, I co-performed the installation in a collaborative improvisation with new music artist, Jeff Morton. In our performance, I responded to the fluctuating sounds of the installation; Jeff responded to my sound. Together, the sound installation and performers intertwined as a sound collective.



Figure 7. Documentation of sound installation, *A Little Piece of String*, 2018. Remail Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remail Modern, Saskatoon.



Figure 8. Documentation details. *A Little Piece of String*. Remail Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remail Modern, Saskatoon



Figure 9. Documentation details. *A Little Piece of String*. Remail Modern, Saskatoon (2018). Images courtesy of Remail Modern, Saskatoon



Figure 10. Documentation of Performance with Jeff Morton of *A Little Piece of String*, Oct 2018. Remai Modern, Saskatoon. Images courtesy of Remai Modern, Saskatoon.

Link 3. Time-based Media: Audio, Website, and Interview. *A Little Piece of String*, 2018.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/user-18693230/smallsonorities>.

Website: <https://www.ellenmoffat.ca/alittlepieceofstring/>.

Interview: <https://remainmodern.org/field/read/a-little-piece-of-string-ellen-moffat-in-conversation-with-troy-gronsdahl>.

Chapter 3. Becoming Bodies

Surge Narrows, Straights of Georgia.

The crux of the trip was the mile-wide passage renowned for its treacherous tides.¹⁷⁷ As a solo traveler, I studied the marine charts thoroughly in order to cross at slack tide.¹⁷⁸ I arrived early, so bobbed around in the adjacent bay in my kayak, waiting for the tidal interlude. Several pleasure crafts—80' luxury cruisers—motored into the bay, paused briefly, then headed, one-by-one into the channel. Had they misread the chart, or had I? With hesitation, I followed them. The water was calm, initially. It mutated gradually, then exponentially into aggressive whirlpools, white water rapids, vicious currents, and viscous surface surges. Turning back risked capsizing and being subsumed by the undertows. The only way out was forward. I maneuvered through the anarchic flows of the currents in a continuous present until I reached the dock of my friend, exhausted. “You’re an hour early,” she said.

PAUSE

Tidal currents are similar to the background noise of the seaside, that placid and vehement uproar of murmur and murmuring that never ceases: it is “limitless, continuous, unending, unchanging.”¹⁷⁹ Michel Serres calls background noise the ground of our being; it is “not a matter of phenomenology so it is a matter of being itself... part of the in-itself and for-itself;... noise is metaphysical.”¹⁸⁰ Cox extends metaphysics to think about the

¹⁷⁷ Surge Narrows is one of the most dangerous tidal streams in the world. The narrow passage intensifies the flow and force of water, creating currents up to 16 knots on the flow tide, and 14 knots on the ebb tide. Surge Narrows runs between Quadra, Cortes, Maurelle, Sonora, and Read Islands in British Columbia.

¹⁷⁸ Travel advisories are to cross only between tidal flows when waters are passive for about 20 minutes.

¹⁷⁹ Serres uses the terms noise and background noise interchangeably, without differentiation. Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 13.

¹⁸⁰ Feminist phenomenology considers phenomenology as a methodology. My reading of Serres’s use of the term refers to experience in contrast to matter. Serres, *Genesis*, 13.

sonic arts beyond music—as sound, noise, and silence—and to challenge ontological and epistemological convention.¹⁸¹ He argues that sonic flux is the “immemorial material flow” of energy-matter that precedes and exceeds human expression. For him, sound art samples from sonic flux.¹⁸²

PAUSE

The body-in-motion is situated in the materiality of forces that resemble sonic materiality (... *a speculation that unfolds...*). She is a phenomenal subject, embodied, and embedded in the materiality of this flux (... *a new speculation...*). She navigates through its fluctuation, using its materiality for her propulsion. I use the event as a rhetorical device to mix and remix different notions of sonic materiality the transience of sound, listening and noise, and the phenomenal subject in the world.

PAUSE

This chapter connects sound, materiality, bodies, becoming, and noise (*pause*) using the body-in-motion to traverse Cox’s sonic thinking, Braidotti’s becoming *as if*, and Voegelin’s sonic subject (in) noise (... *as speculation...*). I sample from sonic materiality, the non-unitary subject, and the sonic subject (... *pausing...*) with their differences to interweave thinking sonically, the becoming subject, and the sense and non-sense of sound as limits, boundaries, bodies, and the language of sound and sound art (... *as if...*) The encounter of the body with the materiality of aqueous noise is considered through sonic materiality, feminist new materialism, and the sonic subject (...*as forces and intensities, unfolding and becoming, and sense and non-sense...*). This connects to questions about the agential capacity, transformation and transgression, and listening to silence and noise in sound artworks.

POSITIONS

¹⁸¹ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 2.

¹⁸² Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 2.

Materialist philosophies contest the separation of nature and culture, human and nonhuman, mind and body, and the symbolic and the real. The question for feminist phenomenology is how materialist philosophy accounts for the corporeal being and ourselves as subjects and agents. (*Pause.*) The encounter of the body-in-motion with the tidal currents is with the materiality of energy-matter. The interconnectivity of natural forces and human (*and experiential*) elements co-exist in relations of unequal power. As a woman, I advocate for agency, but accept that material—and immaterial—forces exceed bodies. The body-in-motion connects the phenomenal subject, embodiment, and sense and non-sense to different philosophical understandings of materiality. Bodies, (sonic) materiality, nomadic consciousness, and navigation overlap. The intersection of these positions is not quiet: the mind-independence of materialist thought disturbs the human-centric thinking of phenomenology.

PAUSE

Cox asks what it would mean to think sonically rather than simply to think about sound.¹⁸³ His sonic philosophy asks: how sound can inflect philosophy and how ideas and concepts can inform thinking.¹⁸⁴ His materialist proposal for sound rejects the binary opposition of subject/object, mind/matter, and nature/culture. Sound is independent of humanity: it is part of the materiality of the world. His notion of sonic flux as mind-independence thinks through sound as flux, event and effect. In challenging the position of the human subject as the (*exclusive*) “receiver and interpreter of auditory signals,” Cox locates the human subject within the materiality of sonic flux.¹⁸⁵ (*Pausing.*) He reconnects the listener to the “continuous, anonymous flux” of sound.¹⁸⁶

PAUSE

¹⁸³ Christoph Cox, “Sonic Thought,” in *Sonic Thinking*, 99.

¹⁸⁴ Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 104.

¹⁸⁵ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 4.

¹⁸⁶ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 4.

Braidotti's notion, *as if*, offers a figurative mode for the flow of connections and connectivity in relation to nomadic consciousness.¹⁸⁷ The notion of interconnectivity links differences and diversity—of women, bodies, the multiple, experience, and sexuality. The nomadic consciousness of Braidotti as a threshold of transformation offers fluid thinking with attention to gender, sexuality, and becoming, and the possibility for human and non-human relations with the world.¹⁸⁸ The fusion of natureculture collapses dualistic thinking with a realistic, pragmatic position to affirm matter as materiality and processes as materialization.¹⁸⁹ (*Pause.*) Braidotti affirms the relationality of experience, material forces, and the possibility for transformation at subjective and collective levels.

PAUSE

Voegelin's sonic subject brings a phenomenal ear to listening. The sonic sensibility of her philosophy of sound art is grounded in the ephemeral invisibility of sound and listening as sharing time and space with the auditory object through involved participation.¹⁹⁰ Her attention to listening and noise, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, contingency, and the transience of sound offers a phenomenological reading of listening as social relations—or their collapse—without judgement. (*Pause.*) In addressing how the listener listens, she differentiates between meaning, sensation, and doubt, opening up discourse about sonic experience.

PAUSE

The body in the tidal currents is situated in the fluctuating materiality of the world in which she acts and is acted upon. She is a phenomenal subject in the materiality of noise.

¹⁸⁷ The term, 'as if,' can be traced through the philosophical texts of Emmanuel Kant, W.L. Austin, Jacques Derrida, and Gilles Deleuze. Performance theorist Richard Scheckner uses it as a metaphor for the real. Braidotti uses the term in relation to the Deleuzian figurative mode for nomadic consciousness. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 5.

¹⁸⁸ Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism*, 93.

¹⁸⁹ The term 'natureculture' was coined by Donna Haraway (2003) to recognize the inseparability of nature and culture as ecological relations that are formed biophysically and socially. New materialists Braidotti and Manuel DeLanda both build on Haraway's natureculture. Dolphijn and van der Tuin, *New Materialism*, 34.

¹⁹⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, xii.

While the phenomenon of the tidal currents is different from the sonic materiality of Cox, these forces of energy-matter resonate. The embodied experience of these forces translates the concepts of metaphysics into real events, effects, and affects. The phenomenal subject is situated in a material world that exceeds her. Her navigation through the fluctuation of the tidal currents while being propelled by them opens up questions of agency, becoming, and listening within the anonymous materiality of noise.

PROPOSITION 1: *Thinking Sonically*

Cox conceptualizes sonic materiality as the primordial flux of forces of energy-matter. His position affirms immanent metaphysics: it recognizes only entities generated by “material and energetic processes that constitute nature.”¹⁹¹ For him, “all entities and events in the universe are products of immanent and contingent material and energetic processes.”¹⁹² His materialist position affirms that matter is “all there is.”¹⁹³ His approach to sound art is through noise. For him, noise is the source from which “all speech, music, and signal emerge, and to which they return.”¹⁹⁴ This recalls the noise of the seaside or the high seas of Serres as the ground of our being. Noise is “not a matter of phenomenology so it is a matter of being itself.”¹⁹⁵ Reality is mind-independent.¹⁹⁶ “[F]lows of matter and energy that fundamentally constitute the world are autonomous from the human mind and indifferent to our beliefs, desires, and descriptions of it.”¹⁹⁷

Cox asks what it would mean to *think sonically* rather than merely *think about* sound. His sonic philosophy thinks about sound—and sound art—as flux, event, and effect. He

¹⁹¹ Cox’s sonic materiality aligns with the immanent metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze and Manuel DeLanda. Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 6.

¹⁹² Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 6.

¹⁹³ Cox considers immanent metaphysics to be both realist and materialist. Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 119.

¹⁹⁵ Serres, *Genesis*, 13.

¹⁹⁶ Cox acknowledges Nietzsche’s theory of self-organization. He connects Nietzsche’s will to power to materialists Gilbert Simondon, Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers, Deleuze and Guattari, and Manuel DeLanda. Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 25.

¹⁹⁷ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 6.

categorizes bodies into two kind of entities: bodies that act and are acted upon and bodies of incorporeal events and effects. “In the first place, there exist *bodies* that have various qualities, that act and are acted upon, and that inhabit states of affairs in the world. Yet in addition to bodies, there exist incorporeal *events* or *effects* that are caused by bodies but differ in nature from them.”¹⁹⁸

PAUSE.

Thinking through the tidal currents in terms of sonic materiality connects the real of the tidal forces to the real of sonic flux as a speculative proposition. The goal in comparing tidal materiality to sonic materiality is to address the question of agency as relations of the subject to materiality. The body-in-motion situated in the tidal currents encounters the force of this real materiality. The stakes are high. Without action, she would have been swept through the currents without self-direction. The navigation of the body-in-motion through the living materiality of this force is her agential capacity.

PAUSE.

The question of agency is complicated. The noise of the tidal currents is the mind-independent forces of energy-matter of the material real. The experience of the situated subject within these forces gives flesh to Cox’s conceptualization of materiality in which “all entities and events in the universe are the product of immanent and contingent material and energetic processes” without privilege or special status for the human.¹⁹⁹ (*Pause.*) In addressing the question of what the female—or feminist—subject is capable of doing, Elizabeth Grosz distinguishes between freedom *from* and freedom *to*: what’s at stake for her is “the subject’s freedom through its immersion in materiality.”²⁰⁰ She explores agency through Bergson’s notion of freedom as acts that are free acts, or not.

¹⁹⁸ Cox’s sonic thinking is influenced by the ontology of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari who were inspired by the Stoics, Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, and others. Christoph Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 104.

¹⁹⁹ Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 6.

²⁰⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 61.

Grosz's reading of the Bergsonian notion of freedom brings agency to bodies in their capacity to act and be acted upon.

PAUSE.

The body-in-motion works with the energy of these forces of materiality in order to navigate through them. Her actions are an engagement with this anonymous materiality. She works *with* these forces with full recognition of the imbalance of their respective intensities. Her actions do not maintain the binary of nature/culture or human/nonhuman, (... *pausing*...) nor does she privilege the human.

PAUSE.

The phenomenal subject in the materiality of the tidal currents confirms the capacity to act in proportional to how she is acted upon. She reacts to its force strategically. The capacity of the body to act is her agency; she works within—and pushes—her capacity. The agency of the situated body extends a feminist phenomenal world view through her engagement with events and effects as the capacity of bodies to act. The phenomenal body brings agential capacity to thinking sonically, within limits.

ENCOUNTER: *Body-in-Motion*

The body-in-motion encounters the intensity of the anonymous, autonomous living materiality through her situatedness at that time and place. To repeat, she is an embodied subject, immersed in the materiality of the natural world. The force of the currents sharpens her awareness to the stakes of the situation: she is a disposable material being. She maneuvers through this aqueous materiality with intentionality by listening acutely to the flow and force of the currents, using her paddle as a prosthetic sensor to probe their resistance and directionality for her actions, her listening simultaneously subjective and relational, and corporeal and intercorporeal. She reacts to the intensity and fluctuation of this living materiality through her actions and interactions for propulsion through the aqueous noise. (... *driven by pragmatism... adrenalin... impulse... skill... instinct*...) She

samples these living forces while immersed within them by using their force—and hers—to navigate through them.²⁰¹

PAUSE.

The encounter of the body-in-motion in the living materiality of cyclical flows of phenomena and bodies with/in them is transformative (... *as if*...) but not transcendent. The body-in-motion is driven by reflex and capability in response to the situation. Embedded in these forces and flows, the body-in-motion in the materiality of its noise is transformed by this living materiality (... *becoming its materiality*...) while navigating through it.

PROPOSITION 2: Becoming Fluctuation.

In philosophy, *becoming* is an ontological concept that accepts the possibility of change and process in contrast to fixed states of being. Becoming applies to all living forces, including human, non-human, and energy-matter. For Deleuze, the subject is neither pre-existent nor stable; it is always in a process of becoming-other through a process of alliances.²⁰² The notion of becoming is fundamental to poststructuralist feminists such as Braidotti, who contest dichotomies of nature/culture, self/other, and body/technology. Braidotti's new materialism is a 'bodily' or 'carnal' materialism' of the enfolded Deleuzian subject as an in-between, a "folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding outwards of affects."²⁰³ Her commitment to becoming-

²⁰¹ As an act of navigation, sampling the tidal forces evokes the soundings of Hildegard Westerkamp. Andra McCartney applied the term 'sounding' to Westerkamp's listening practice and soundscape compositions as "the mariner's slow and careful navigation through unfamiliar waters, finding a channel through invisible typology. Westerkamp takes time to listen to places in depth in order to understand them, moving slowly and carefully through landscapes listening to their resonances." Both methods of navigation work with the invisible topography of place using listening and embodied process for finding and discovery rather than advance knowing, or an existent map. Unlike Westerkamp's listening practice, there is no option for slow listening in the tidal currents; the actions of the body-in-motion are rapid responses to the fluctuating forces of the currents. Andra McCartney, "*Sounding Places*," 11.

²⁰² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 237-239.

²⁰³ Dolphijn and van der Tuin, *New Materialism*, 106.

animal/becoming-world comes from her lived reality as a woman: “because my gender, historically speaking, never quite made it into full humanity, so my allegiance to that category is at best negotiable and never to be taken for granted.”²⁰⁴ Braidotti does not define matter as solid and stable; she conceptualizes it as ongoing metamorphosis: it is becoming, as are bodies within it.²⁰⁵ For her, subject(ive), object(ive), social, and symbolic are not pre-determined; she conceptualizes them as relations, influences, and situations. The metamorphosis of matter is a question of what bodies are capable of. To recall: for Cox, the body is real, but not mind-independent; it acts and is acted upon.²⁰⁶ (*Pause followed by a longer pause.*) Braidotti proposes the subject in becoming as “a slice of living sensible matter activated by a fundamental drive to life: a *potentia* (rather than a *potestas*) embedded in the corporeal materiality of the self.”²⁰⁷ The subject is:

[a] mobile unit in space and time and therefore an enfolded kind of memory, this subject is not only in process, but is also capable of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations, while remaining extraordinarily faithful to itself.²⁰⁸

She understands ‘faithfulness to itself’ as:

the faithfulness of mutual sets of interdependence and interconnections, that is to say sets of relations and encounters. It is a play of complexity that encompasses all levels of one’s multi-layered subjectivity, binding the cognitive to the emotional, the intellectual to the affective, and connecting them all to a socially embedded ethics of sustainability. This, the faithfulness that is at stake in nomadic ethics coincides with the awareness of one’s condition of interaction with others, that is to say one’s capacity to affect and to be affected. Translated

²⁰⁴ Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions*, 130.

²⁰⁵ Dolphijn and van der Tuin, *New Materialism*, 107.

²⁰⁶ Cox, “Sonic Thought,” 104.

²⁰⁷ Braidotti, *Transpositions*, 155-6.

²⁰⁸ Braidotti, *Transpositions*, 156.

into a temporal scale, this is the faithfulness of duration, the expression of one's continuing attachment to certain dynamic spatio-temporal coordinates.²⁰⁹

The body is malleable, unstable, and responsive to the flux of materiality; it morphs and enfolds external stimulæ from the world. This resonates with Grosz's conceptualization of the body in terms of porosity and liquidity: it is a borderline concept, a threshold, and a hinge that is always in the making.²¹⁰ Christine Daigle links the enfolding and porosity of Grosz's body to Braidotti's nomadic consciousness with its non-fixity of boundaries and "the desire to go on trespassing and transgressing."²¹¹ Daigle calls this a porous fold.²¹²

ENCOUNTER: *Becoming*

The body-in-motion is a situated subject becoming the intensity of fluctuating forces of materiality, aware of her precarity and corporeality. She is a subject, becoming, (in) a boat. She is becoming-boat (*comma*) or becoming-subject-boat with motility in the living materiality of the tidal currents (*comma*) or becoming-subject-boat with motility and mobility in space and time, consciousness, and perception. The becoming-subject-boat enfolds and unfolds with the anonymous autonomy of the fluctuating materiality of the real and her moving in it (... *pause*...) with agential capacity.²¹³ Her encounter is with the materiality, forces, and fluctuation of the world. Braidotti's nomadic ethics of affect and being affected becomes a question of whether the becoming subject in the materiality of the world has capacity to affect this materiality. That question is vast, but not closed.²¹⁴ The subject is an embodied being in the living materiality of the world,

²⁰⁹ Braidotti, *Transpositions*, 156.

²¹⁰ Christine Daigle, "Trans-subjectivity/Trans-objectivity," 186.

²¹¹ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

²¹² Daigle "Trans-subjectivity/Trans-objectivity," 186.

²¹³ For feminist phenomenologist Christine Daigle, the question of human agency—what it is to be an agent—opens up "messy relations between humans and the world." Daigle, "Trans-subjectivity/Trans-objectivity," 183.

²¹⁴ The Butterfly effect is the potential for an event to multiply in scale and scope. The interconnectivity of technology and social networks enable this effect, with positive and negative results.

becoming its materiality. (*Pause.*) The becoming-subject-boat enfolds the living materiality of the fluctuating currents with their discontinuities and variations. She is a subject in the fluctuation of the material real, folding inwards from the forces of currents and outwards as her actions, form, and motility. She moves in and through these flows and forces of natureculture listening to, sounding, and sampling their materiality, with awareness of the interconnectivity of this living materiality and bodies with it. Whether she affects its materiality, or whether this materiality is aware of her are questions.

PROPOSITION 3: *Listening and Noise*

To transpose the materiality of the tidal currents to sound art, I turn to Voegelin's listening subject. Fundamental to Voegelin's philosophy of sound art as "sharing time and space with the object or event under consideration" is the notion that the sound artwork and the subject are in continual production; each are equally transitory.²¹⁵ The subject participates actively in the reception and interpretation of sound. Voegelin's listening subject perceives the heard as reciprocal relations of listening, hearing, and intersubjectivity. She produces what is heard within the transience of sound.²¹⁶ The transience of sound raises doubt about the heard—what was heard or whether I heard anything—meaning sonic perception is subjective and contingent.²¹⁷ The listener is engaged actively in the production of sound through engaging with the sensorial materiality of sound and the temporality of sonic perception while immersed within it.²¹⁸ Listening shapes the sound itself and the listening experience. What is heard is a mix of sound as signal and external circumstances as conditions as well as the active process of the listener to the sound. In other words, the circumstances in which the sound occurs shape how the listener attends to listening. The listener is entwined with the heard: in

²¹⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, xii.

²¹⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 15.

²¹⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 10.

²¹⁸ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 5.

addition, she actively, and inadvertently, generates sound while listening through her bodily movements.²¹⁹

PAUSE

Voegelin considers noise as “acute sonicness.”²²⁰ She compares noise to Michel Chion’s ‘clump of sensation’ that grasps the listener’s attention exclusively.²²¹ Noise occupies the listener’s attention fully, cancelling sounds other than those of noise. She relates the sensate experience of noise to the phenomenological non-sense of Merleau-Ponty as perception that comes from sensing rather than rationality. The sonic subject “grasps sense as non-sense.”²²² She is a sonic subject, listening in noise. Voegelin distinguishes between listening that opens sound and shares meaning and noise that reduces listening to sensing rather than understanding. Immersed in the intensity of noise, the listener senses only the phenomenon under consideration.²²³ (*Pausing.*) For the body-in-motion, the noise of the tidal currents starts with the senses. Her situatedness intensifies her listening. The body-in-motion listens to the intensity of tidal materiality as noise. The intensity of this noise makes her aware of her precarity. She cannot afford to listen to sound for itself. Her subjectivity does not collapse; listening to noise as non-sense translates her situatedness as the sense of communication. Immersed within this noise, the body-in-motion listens actively to the autonomous material real of the tidal currents in order to navigate through them. She is (... *more than...*) Voegelin’s sonic subject listening in noise.

ENCOUNTER: *Becoming (in) Noise*

²¹⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 5.

²²⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 47.

²²¹ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 47.

²²² Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 72.

²²³ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 67.

The currents settle in her. She becomes the anonymity of their materiality (... *a speculation...*) as she samples their force in her navigation and agential capacity within their noise.

PAUSE

Unlike the listener in noise, she does not abandon herself to their intensity.

PAUSE

She maneuvers through their fluctuating materiality.

PERIOD.

She listens critically and cognitively to the physical force of this living noise, reacts pragmatically to its flows, resistance, and directional reversals, her actions contingent on the directionality and intensity of this materiality. She senses these intensities with embodied, situated, and synesthetic perception. Her actions connect (*her*) subjectivity with (*their*) objectivity in a “close and reciprocal bond.”²²⁴ The becoming-subject-boat merges with the viscosity of this materiality as a way of being-in-the-noise-from-within-it.

ENCOUNTER: *Non-Sense*

Immersed in the materiality of noise (*a speculation*) and in motion (*a fact*), the subject enfolds the anonymous sensation of these fluctuating forces (*as a proposition*). Her becoming is constituted by the tonality of her actions and interactions, subjectivity, corporeality, and intercorporeality, agency and motility, the sexed body, and the intensity of the material noise. The intensity of their materiality and noise becomes her intensity. The phenomenal subject becomes the intense materiality of the tidal currents for that

²²⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 75.

moment and situation, her navigation enabled by her agential capacity to act in response to how she is acted upon. This encounter is not fully resolved. However, it functions as a speculative proposition for the interconnectivity of embodiment, materiality, and feminist new materialism as a means to extend notions of unfolding, becoming subjects, and agential capacity to sound art.

(INTERLUDE)

Navigation within the aqueous material flux is an encounter with the unknown, fluctuating real. The invisibility of its typography suggests Hildegard Westerkamp's *sounding*, with difference: sounding the aqueous flux is driven by urgency. By comparison, the sounding of Westerkamp is an itinerant movement through space on foot. Her ambulation infers transience, the nomadic, and mobility. It calls up the peripatetic "of walking" or "given to walking about." The peripatetic school of Aristotle starts with experience as the basis for science/philosophy, induction, logic, and truth. Navigation through space is an encounter with that which other than the subject and alters the subject through temporal, sensorial, relational aspects of space. Navigation through the currents is an encounter with noise. The subject navigates through its force, focused entirely on the task-at-hand. Ambulation allows for listening to sound by the subject while moving on foot through an environment of human and nonhuman life forms. Westerkamp listens to the world and to herself within it, attentive to the proximity, spatiality, and sounds heard in relation to her body as an embodied woman.

ACTION: PEDESTRIAN'S PROGRESS

The subject's mode of movement through space affects the perception of space as a result of intersubjective relations, sensorial experience, and sounds heard. Somatic rhythms connect the walker's subjectivity and corporeality to human and nonhuman beings as intersubjective, intercorporeal, and sensorial relations. In walking, the subject can determine pace and direction of movement with reduced risk from external (*material*)

forces. These items are small, but notable. (*Pause.*) The sound walk of Westerkamp situates the moving body in a soundscape of locale, listening, hearing, and generating a live feed of what sound is using a strategy of active listening. Her approach to listening and walking employs sounding as a method of way-finding and understanding the way forward as a locative listening practice. (*Pause.*) To recall, for Voegelin, listening is a mode of walking in that it is an active method of generative discovery and interpretation. “What I hear is discovered not received, and this discovery is generative, a fantasy: always different and subjective and continually, presently now.”²²⁵ I look at two versions of locative listening walks.

(*LINER NOTES*)

In the 1960’s, composer R. Murray Schafer founded the World Soundscape Project (WSP) as a new kind of thinking in response to the changing soundscape of the world due to industrialization and urbanization. At this time, attitudes about musical convention and aesthetics centred on sound/music/noise were shifting. The listening practice of soundscape composer Hildegard Westerkamp and the listening walks of experimental percussionist, composer, and sound artist Max Neuhaus fit within this context (... *their ears tuned differently*).²²⁶ Neuhaus and Westerkamp developed their listening walks independently—in 1966 and 1974 respectively—on opposite coasts of North America, equally divergent in their sonic sensibilities and their aesthetic and ideological stances. (*Pause.*) Both artists embrace chance sonic events as the here-and-now of sound. Neuhaus’s listening walk takes a conceptual approach to listening and sound as non-musical sound or noise in contrast to Westerkamp’s sound walk with her attention to

²²⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 4.

²²⁶ Westerkamp was a colleague of Schafer, an affiliate of the WSP, and a member of the acoustic ecology movement. Her practice of soundscape composition, sound installations, radio projects, soundwalks and writing include community work as an acoustic ecologist. Neuhaus was a composer, avant-garde percussionist, visual and sound installation artist. His permanent sound installations separate sound from time, making sound into an entity. Alicia Zuckerman, “Max Neuhaus’s ‘Times Square,’” *Arts Electric*, May 30, 2002 in Cox, *Sonic Flux*, 140.

sounds of locale as acoustic ecology.²²⁷ I use Neuhaus' listening walk to introduce Westerkamp's sound walk.

The route of the listening or sound walk sets the parameters for the sonic sensibility of the soundscape, without control of the outcomes. Neuhaus took listening outside the conventional musical venue—the concert hall—to contest the sacralization of everyday sound within the concert hall. His routes were through mixed industrial and residential neighbourhoods on the cusp of transition and gentrification in lower Manhattan, his ear attuned to non-musical sound.²²⁸ Westerkamp's routes through parks, residential neighbourhoods, and along shorelines attend to small sounds of locale, reflecting the anti-noise sonic aesthetics of the WSP; some of her sound walks include choreographed sound events.²²⁹ Her attention is to the sound walk as a listening practice that “*reveals* the environment to the listener and opens inner space for *noticing*.”²³⁰

ACTION: *listening walk*

Neuhaus's first listening walk, “Concert of Traveled and Traveling Music,” encouraged participants to absorb familiar noises including “a rumbling power plant, highways, river, people in the streets, and so on” of the city in the Lower East Side of Manhattan.²³¹ The event ended at his studio where he performed a percussion repertoire, after which he

²²⁷ The locative sound walks of artists such as Janet Cardiff's audio walk, and Christina Kubisch's electrical walk exceed this research.

²²⁸ Meghan Murph, “Max Neuhaus's Sound Works and the Politics of Noise,” *Ecomusicology Review Home*, Volume 7 (2019), <https://ecomusicology.info/max-neuhauss-sound-works-and-the-politics-of-noise/>.

²²⁹ Some of Westerkamp's soundwalks extend to soundscape compositions, constructed from field recordings of locale that were broadcast on Vancouver Co-operative Radio in the 1970's and in Banff for the art project and residency, “Radio Rethink,” in 1992. Hildegard Westerkamp, “The Soundscape on Radio,” in *Radio Rethink: Art, Sound and Transmission*, ed. Daina Augaitis and Dan Lander, (Banff: Walter Philips Gallery, The Banff Centre for the Arts, 1994), 88.

²³⁰ Hildegard Westerkamp, “Listening Walking Remembering A sound journey in words,” *Sight Sound Silence*, *Blackflash*, Vol 24 (2007), 51.

²³¹ Sound artist and experimental percussionist, Max Neuhaus. The event was “Concert of Traveled and Traveling Music” in 1966. Murph, “Max Neuhaus's Sound Works.”

stamped the word “LISTEN” on participants' hands in lieu of a program or itinerary.²³² Subsequently, he extended the listening walk into a series of ‘Lecture Demonstrations’ in which:

the rubber stamp was the lecture and the walk the demonstration. I would ask the audience at a concert or lecture to collect outside the hall, stamp their hands and lead them through their everyday environment. Saying nothing, I would simply concentrate on listening, and start walking. At first, they would be a little embarrassed, of course, but the focus was generally contagious. The group would proceed silently, and by the time we returned to the hall many had found a new way to listen for themselves.²³³

Influenced by the use of everyday sound in compositions of Russolo, Varèse, and Cage, Neuhaus’s listening walk reversed the relations of everyday sound and the concert hall by taking to the listener to the location of the everyday sound. His action is a non-musical sound work that took the concert outdoors as a listening event, with attention to everyday noise. (*Pause.*) Neuhaus’ noise is not the noise art of Merzbow’s assault of the body that “contracts [the] intersubjectivity” of Voegelin²³⁴ nor is it Russolo’s noise machines.²³⁵ It is everyday urban sound of what is, where it is. The listener moves through the sonic materiality of the urban soundscape listening to in situ noise of quotidian sound for itself. His argument is with conventions of music.

²³² “LISTEN” precedes Neuhaus’ article about the contestation of a 1972 noise abatement law in New York City. In an editorial titled, “BANG, BOOoom, ThumP, EEEK, tinkle,” Neuhaus’s first published in the *New York Times* in 1974, contested noise ordinances in New York City, unsuccessfully. Neuhaus’ contested noise ordinances of New York City on the grounds that the city’s “noise propaganda” only made “more noise.” Murph, “Max Neuhaus’s Sound Works.”

²³³ Worth noting is a project by Christine Sun Kim which adapted Neuhaus’ *LISTEN* project to a mediated text-based listening walk in Manhattan in 2016. Claire Voon, “A Silent Soundwalk, Noisy with Abstract Compositions,” *Hyperallergic* (November 2016) <https://hyperallergic.com/335030/a-silent-soundwalk-noisy-with-abstract-compositions/>.

²³⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 47.

²³⁵ Merzbow is an extreme noise project, started in 1979 by Japanese sound artist, Masami Akita.

ACTION: *sound walk*

Westerkamp's sound walks are conceptualized as listening strategies that emphasize relations of the body, movement, and place as an interaction of bodies in and to place. The listener's body becomes an index of the scale of place and the beginning of a dialogue with place.²³⁶ There are instructions:

Start by listening to the sounds of your body while moving. They are closest to you and establish the first dialogue between you and the environment. If you can hear even the quietest of these sounds you are moving through an environment which is scaled on human proportions. In other words, with your voice or your footsteps for instance, you are "talking" to your environment which then in turn responds by giving your sounds a specific acoustic quality.²³⁷

It is not surprising that she considers sounds of a place like its language.²³⁸ Her language is sonic; her text itself becomes a found sound poem of intimate, quiet sounds:

*listening... sounds... your body... moving... dialogue... hear... quietest...
sounds... moving... voice... footsteps... talking... responds... sounds...
acoustic.*²³⁹

Andra McCartney positions Westerkamp's work within feminist epistemologies with their recognition of the relationships of power and knowledge, gendered dichotomies of nature-culture, and interactions between the environment and the individual and the environment and the community.²⁴⁰ She compares Westerkamp's practice to Braidotti's nomadic subject as a figurative mode that connects feminism, intellectual thought, and

²³⁶ McCartney, "Sounding Places," 78.

²³⁷ McCartney, "Sounding Places," 29.

²³⁸ McCartney, "Sounding Places," 81.

²³⁹ As a gesture, I selected words from her instructions, words in which I could hear bodies moving quietly.

²⁴⁰ McCartney, "Sounding Places," 18-19.

notions of the multiple.²⁴¹ The becoming nomadic involves an “active displacement of identity, memory, and identification” by building on structures of difference, transformation, and the principle of not-One.²⁴²

PAUSE

John Cage and Pauline Oliveros were significant influences on Westerkamp’s development. From Cage, she acquired “an openness to all possibilities. No attempt to control anything or anybody... offering a space to relax into. A freedom. An inner space that feels authentic.”²⁴³ From Oliveros, she picked up an open compositional approach which overturned roles of the composer and performers—the composer became a listener and the audience became performers. She also learned how to work with breath and the body, and how to incorporate technology.²⁴⁴ Westerkamp’s attention to the specificities of place, the moving body, and listening employs a phenomenological method of discovery, finding, and listening to sonic flows, energies, and sonic rhythms as a listening practice by sounding it.²⁴⁵ Her soundings make audible the multiple voices of human, nonhuman and place as relations.²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ Braidotti’s multiple refers to her speaking and writing in different languages. Rosi Braidotti, “Writing as a Nomadic Subject,” *Comparative Critical Studies*, 11.2-3 (2014), Edinburgh University Press, (163-184) 167.

²⁴² McCartney’s thinking is grounded in the philosophies of difference of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, and Irigaray. Braidotti, “Writing as a Nomadic Subject,” 170-171.

²⁴³ McCartney, “Sounding Places,” 140.

²⁴⁴ Oliveros’ method of playing and processing the accordion extended to her compositional approach with “a breathing type of environment, providing a place for the listener to breathe in and for herself.” Andra McCartney. “Gender, Genre and Electroacoustic Soundmaking Practices.” *Intersections Canadian Journal of Music* 26, No. 2 (2006), 32.

²⁴⁵ This sensibility extends to Westerkamp’s electro-acoustic compositions. McCartney “Sounding Places,” 13.

²⁴⁶ I have facilitated and participated in soundwalks. As a facilitator, my routes included back-alleys, shopping malls, and commercial strips rather than residential neighbourhoods. In public space, the soundwalk gently disrupts social codes for behavior. The leader, trailed by a pack of silent followers, has little awareness of attention generated by the silent pack of participants who follow her. The public’s reaction is apparent to participants.

ACTION and REACTION: *sound walk listening*

As a collective body, we follow the leader's walking pace on a route selected for its ambient sonic character, in this case a residential neighbourhood—in Regina, Saskatchewan in 2007—as separate and multiple subjectivities, while moving through space and listening actively, in silence, an experience which is novel, initially, but the collective body is neither silent nor mute (...*instead...*) bodies generate sound through their bodily actions of footsteps, a cough, a crunch, a splash, whispering, merging with local sound that (... *in fact...*) foregrounds what I hear due to the proximity of our bodies, augmented by the quietness of the suburban neighbourhood on a Sunday morning, our generated sounds obscuring small sounds of locale, such as birds, dogs, or neighbours in conversation, meaning my sonic awareness is of our generated sonic bubble (... *until...*) a car drives, creating a doppler wave of hip hop that subsumes the small sounds of our collective body (... *with a blast...*) by chance or by script, shifting the soundscape generatively and heterogeneously from semi-quiet to cacophony as a mix of walkers' generated sound and ambient environmental sound. That was my intersubjective experience of the soundscape of Westerkamp's sound walk.

PAUSE

As a listening practice, the sound walk is quietly demanding. Being in a collective body in motion, generating and producing sound while listening to the generated sound is saturating. The event is not bracketed like a performance in a concert hall or off-site venue in which the listener's attention is dedicated to the staged event. The soundscape is the totality of the multiple tonalities of the sound environment in which the listener interacts with others and the self, listening to and producing sound in real time. Listening is subjective and intersubjective. The subject listens inward to her thoughts, her breath, and her bodily sensations, as well as to the soundscape and other bodies as an intersubjective engagement with the heterogeneity of human and nonhuman sound environment.

(ADDENDUM)

Westerkamp's aesthetic approach to the sound walk overlaps with her soundscape compositions and acoustic ecology projects through her consciousness and awareness of the inter-relations of sound, nature and society. The slow pace of the sound walk enables listening and intersubjective engagement with the soundscape by attuning the ear of the listener to the sonic locale in itself (... *with resonance*...) as a quality of interconnectedness.²⁴⁷ (... *as if*...) Her writings expand on her ideas and differences between music, soundscape composition, and acoustic ecology.

To recap, Westerkamp's listening starts as a self-reflexive act of listening to oneself listening; it becomes listening as a dialogue between the listener and the environment.²⁴⁸ Her commitment to the soundscape is the effect of listening on a personal perceptual level; we are all "positioned *inside* the soundscape." The sound walk brings "our existing *position-inside-the-soundscape* to full consciousness... to reveal the relationship *between* listeners' experiences and their acoustic-social environment."²⁴⁹ She connects listening to ecology through Gernot Böhme's concept of the *in-between-ness* of subjects, objects, and situations²⁵⁰ and David Suzuki's notion of the world as "sets of relationships rather than separated objects."²⁵¹ The notion of in-between-ness and of sets of relationships connects listening to environment as intersubjective relations of the soundscape as our commons. The subject is situated within the fluctuating soundscape; she listens to the soundscape as social relations with the world. She is becoming this soundscape.

PROPOSITION 4: *the multiple*

²⁴⁷ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 5.

²⁴⁸ Westerkamp, "Listening Walking Remembering," 54.

²⁴⁹ Westerkamp, "Listening Walking Remembering," 52.

²⁵⁰ Gernot Böhme, "Acoustic Atmospheres, A contribution to the Study of Ecological Aesthetics," trans. Norbert Ruebsaat, in *Soundscape—The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*, Vol 1. No 1 (Spring 2000), 15.

²⁵¹ David Suzuki with Amanda McConnell, *The Sacred Balance—Rediscovering Our Place in Nature*, (Vancouver, BC: Greystone Books, 1997), 198.

To recap, the non-unity of the Braidotti's subject has "an acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries. It is the intense desire to go on trespassing."²⁵² Her nomadic consciousness aims to rethink the unity of the subject "without reference to humanistic beliefs, without dualistic oppositions, linking instead body and mind in a new set of intensive and often intransitive transitions."²⁵³ In considering the nomadic subject as post-identitarian, she uses 'nomadic' as a verb to infer a process of multiple transformations and ways of belonging, as well as proposing an alternative cartography of the non-unitary subject.²⁵⁴ The abandonment of identity enters into the process of the becoming of subjectivity as transversal and collective. Braidotti advocates that from an ethical position, the collective is our responsibility and the condition for our survival.²⁵⁵ Shifting boundaries and territories of the non-unitary subject, becoming other, and becoming multiple align with the active listening to sounds of others in the world in the listening practice of the sound walk.²⁵⁶ The notion of nomadism resonates with materiality, fluctuation, transience, and the non-borders of sound. The concept of nomadism as an absence of fixed borders, forms, and identities means relations between entities are not static or prescribed. Relations between bodies, subjects and material forces unfold as shifting interconnections of the politics of location, notions of the multiple, becoming, belonging, differences, and ethics.

PAUSE

In its conceptualization of the embodied subject within the world(s) they inhabit, feminist phenomenology shifts its understanding of a decentred subject who is multiple rather than singular. Rather than "a point of view from the internal perspective of a singular subject," the decentred subject is situated it "on the boundary between the inner realm of thought

²⁵² Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

²⁵³ Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 31.

²⁵⁴ Sara Saleri, "On Nomadism: A Conversation with Rosi Braidotti," *European Alternatives*, July 24, 2018. <http://politicalcritique.org/world/2018/nomadism-braidotti/>.

²⁵⁵ Saleri, *On Nomadism*.

²⁵⁶ McCarthy quotes Braidotti's use of Deleuze's nomadism in relation to Westerkamp's sound project in India. McCartney "Sounding Places," 448.

and feeling and the experiential and exterior world of the political, social and ethical forces and acts.”²⁵⁷ (*Pause.*) In the sound walk, the subject is situated within the collective which is situated within a local environment; the image is closer to intersecting, expanding rings created by pebbles thrown into the pond. In her listening practice, Westerkamp aims to increase awareness of the acoustic environment, the aesthetic pleasures of listening, and rhythms as the voice of a city.²⁵⁸ Her project is, in part, pedagogical. These actions extend her concern as an acoustic ecologist with the quality of the sound environment to listening as a practice through conscious attention to the soundscape including one’s own listening and soundmaking habits as our interrelations with/in soundscapes, an activity that she considers as activism.

She constructs sound compositions from her field recordings, and often includes her voice, using a dialogic approach with sonic, social, political, and technological resonances.²⁵⁹ There is a calm beauty in these works, and, perhaps, a melancholy or nostalgia for another time or place rather than the present one. I hear their (*and her*) quietness as other-worldly. (*Pausing*). Her soundscape compositions give voice to place—the water, insects, nonhuman inhabitants, and her voice—as an interconnectivity of living materiality of place in dialogue with the rhythms, inhabitants, and resonance of locale. She becomes part of this community. (*As if.*) As an aesthetic sensibility, her soundscape compositions resonate with the narrative structure of Virginia Woolf’s stream of consciousness which follows a character’s line of thought, layering the personal with the poetic, the social with the private, and the real with the imagined.²⁶⁰ (*Pause.*) Time is suspended: is it the present real or the imaginary present? Westerkamp’s soundscape compositions take the listener to and through an ecological locale with intimacy,

²⁵⁷ Fielding, *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, viii.

²⁵⁸ Westerkamp, *Nada Sound Walk*, nd.

<https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/sound/installations/Nada/soundwalk/#soundwalk-is>.

²⁵⁹ McCartney “Sounding Places,” 11.

²⁶⁰ Woolf’s novel and main character, Mrs Dalloway, is an acute observer and listener situated within the everyday and their connections, synchronicities, and associations. The novel is sonic in its style, thought, and imagery.

presentness, and proximity. The listener is drawn into its (*and her*) quietness as a poetic place.

PROPOSITION 5: *listening in noise*

In contrast, I return to noise and a collaborative performative artwork. For Voegelin, noise occupies the listener's attention by "excluding other sounds, creating a bubble against sounds, destroying sonic signifiers and divorcing listening from sense material external to its noise... Sound is noisy when it deafens my ears to anything but itself."²⁶¹ She argues that noise does not need to be loud to be affective, but that it needs to be exclusive. (*The faucet drips.*) Whether noise is quotidian sound or noise art, it "takes possession of one's ears by one's own free will and against it, isolating the listener in the heard."²⁶² Noise is an experiential space.²⁶³ The listener is immersed in noise (... *pausing...*) and alone with its sounds. (*Pause.*) The listener merges with the noise, becoming its noise, immersed in its materiality. She becomes its materiality through active participation "to experience the ecstasy of her own autonomous listening."²⁶⁴ There is no communication or intersubjectivity.

PAUSE

The contraction of intersubjectivity is offset by the centrifugal tug of noise that pulls the body outside itself to "become a visceral body that has left the sense of material objectivity to live in the dense ephemerality of sound as itself."²⁶⁵ In abandoning herself to noise, the sonic subject merges with it. (*pausing.*) She is porous and fragmented.²⁶⁶ She becomes sensation.

²⁶¹ Voegelin includes tiny sounds which the listener is unable to ignore, as well as loud sounds. Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 43-44.

²⁶² Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 44.

²⁶³ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 47-8.

²⁶⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 48.

²⁶⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 68.

²⁶⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 68.

(A QUESTION OR TWO)

Voegelin's sonic subject is a solitary, listening body at a noise performance by Merzbow, her subjectivity collapsed. For her, noise "demands aesthetic autonomy in its sheer insistence on being heard, alone."²⁶⁷ Both the listening subject and performer are autonomous subjects. She compares aesthetic autonomy to the sensible sentient of Merleau-Ponty as one-ness rather than modernist autonomy.²⁶⁸ To explore the aesthetic autonomy of this noise, I turn to a collaborative noise performance in which two bodies are intertwined as a collective body, becoming the other. This affirms the non-unity of Braidotti's subject as a becoming multiple body.

The task-driven collaborative actions in Diana Burgoyne's *Stuck To The Wall* respond to (*and are triggered by*) noise and (*the goal to maintain*) silence. The performers are bound by preset rules. The two performers become one entity that listens to and responds automatically to sonic prompts (*noise*) that dictate their collective action. The subjects are simultaneously alone and inter-connected. They are becoming one (*with noise and silence... and the other*). Whether their subjectivities or intersubjectivities have fused as one is not clear. They are intertwined. Noise is offset by silence as an intertwining of the grating sensation of noise and the pregnant tension of silence.

ACTION: *Performative sound installation*

Burgoyne draws attention to our relations with technology and our immersion within technological systems to ask about our becoming part of the cog.²⁶⁹ In questioning the objectification of the body by technology, she constructs a situation in which these relations unfold.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 67.

²⁶⁸ Voegelin, *Listening to Sound and Noise*, 67.

²⁶⁹ Burgoyne's practice of installation, live performance and sculptures using hand-made electronics looks at the interaction of society, technology, culture, and the environment. Her work questions the objectification of the body by technology. While not framing her work directly in terms of feminism, she is consciously aware of being female and that her work is read as female. Greta Hamilton, "The Performances of Diana Burgoyne," (June 2017). https://archive.openspace.ca/sites/default/files/diana_burgoyne_1.pdf.

²⁷⁰ *Stuck To The Wall*, Diana Burgoyne, 1985.

PROGRAM NOTES

1: My text for *Stuck To The Wall* suggests a program, a score, or a set of directions that enacts the performance.

2: The performative installation sets up an oppositional relation for performers, an orientation that facilitates movement for the performers.²⁷¹

Two contraptions, consisting of electronic parts, bits of wood, and metal strapping are anchored on opposing walls of the gallery. Each contraption has five similar subcomponents—a buzzer button, a speaker cone, and electronics—with irritatingly persistent signals of varying frequencies that can be silenced only by direct bodily contact with the buzzers.²⁷² The performance starts with two bodies of equal stature and attire, each facing each wall, their backs to each other. Neither has advantage or privilege over the other or the ability to alter the parameters of their situation.²⁷³

TASK: to produce and maintain silence; the task is shared; the relations are reciprocal.

RULES: to press body parts – hands, forehead, and knees – against the units for silence; each body maintains physical contact with all five buzzers simultaneously.

CHALLENGE: to silence the sound through direct bodily contact with the units. Each body is torqued in its physical stance. From within this contorted pose,

²⁷¹ Burgoyne is aware of the binary reading of the installation when positioned on opposing walls. She has installed the work in corners or adjacent on one wall to avoid this reading. Conversation with the artist, April 2018.

²⁷² Construction is simple: electronics, buttons, batteries, and audio speakers. The work has different presentation modes for performance and for installation. For performance, the given state is noise generation; for installation, the sound is latent.

²⁷³ Documentation is from *Echoing (Silent) Mechanisms* for SoundsLike Festival, Saskatoon, 2016, curated by Eric Mattson. <https://vimeo.com/178828576>.

each body applies pressure on the units to silence the signal. (The task is straightforward, but not easy.)

UNTIL: One person breaks contact; sound erupts immediately.

THEN: Each body... steps back from the wall, turns around.

Each body... walks to the opposite wall without eye contact with the other.

Each body... returns to their position and resumes their task, stuck to the wall.

TO BEGIN: **SCREEEEECH**

Performers press their bodies against buzzers.

SILENCE (LONG)

SCReEeeeCH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE (LONG)

SCReeeEeCH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE

SCREEeeeCH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE (SHORT)

SCReeEeECH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE (SHORTER)

SCREeEeECH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE (SHORT)

SCReeEeECH

Bodies turn around, change locations.

SILENCE (BRIEF)

et cetera.

PAUSE

The two bodies complete a collective task as an intercorporeal body. As subjective bodies, their relations are intertwined: the action of one implicates the other. As an intercorporeal body, their task is to achieve and to maintain silence. Failure to sustain this task produces SCREEEEECH as the message and the messenger, the signal unmistakable. SCREEEEECH creates tension and a visceral response, that is alleviated through movement and renewed silence.²⁷⁴ SCREEEEECH broadcasts the failure of the intercorporeal body to maintain silence as a sonic plosive, a command, and a directive – change locations and begin again. The performance produces interludes of silence and SCREEEEECH of varying durations. Silence becomes briefer as the performance continues. It ends in SCREEEEECH.

PAUSE

²⁷⁴ Hamilton, *The Performances of Diana Burgoyne*.

The sonic eruption brings relief, empathy, and irritation. Sound releases the intercorporeal body briefly, but the system continues. Maintaining silence is a Sisyphean sentence of repetition; failure is broadcast publicly. The sound is sinister in its presence and threatening in its absence (... *pausing*...) adding tension as affect. Sound disrupts the stability of the subjective bodies; they move, but their movement is prescribed, their actions without choice. Each subjective body returns to their solitary space facing the wall, their back turned to the other and to the audience. Similar to the subject in noise, the intercorporeal body abandons itself to the materiality of noise that lurks, in wait for human fatigue and slippage. (... *pausing*...) The creative parameters for the intercorporeal body are containment and constraint. The system is closed. (... *is this as a proposition, or a question?*...) The intercorporeal body acts in reaction but cannot alter its relation to the structure itself.

BACKTALK

As the audience, we witness the reality of others as our own. We laugh or cry, but our laughter and tears are a thin disguise for recognition of our territorialization by a technological system over which we have little control.²⁷⁵ (*The phone rings; a text tings; an email pings. Can I ignore its call?*) Ironically, the weakest link in Burgoyne's system is the life span of a 9-volt battery.

SCREEEECH.

The shared identity and responsibility of the intercorporeal body suggest Braidotti's becoming as a process of abandoning identity in order to construct a collective of subjectivities in relations with others.²⁷⁶ This affirms the non-unitary subject as an enfolding of external influences and unfolding outwards of affects. Sound crosses boundaries continually. The materiality of the sonic affects what she becomes. (*Pause.*)

²⁷⁵ Burgoyne questions the relation of humans to technology without offering an answer. The D.I.Y aesthetic and improvisational sensibility of her electronics thinly mask the relation of the intercorporeal body to technology. Hamilton, *The Performances of Diana Burgoyne*.

²⁷⁶ She includes relations with others, the environment and the future. Saleri, *On Nomadism*.

Her becoming does not reach stasis; it is a state of becoming. The absence of a fixed form challenges perception, hearing, and certainty. The listening subject produces the sound she hears as reciprocal relations of listening and the heard. These bodies-in-motion are anonymous to each other, yet they are intertwined. This is what their intersubjectivity has become.

Interstice Four: Artwork

Sounding Bodies | Body Soundings, (2019)

Senior Artists Residency, PAVED Arts, Saskatoon (July 2019)

Performance, *Sounds Like: Real Sound*, Oct 2019.

Sounds Like: An Audio Festival, PAVED Arts and Unheard Sound Collective (Oct 2019)

This collaborative performance with vocalist Helen Pridmore was the result of a Senior Artists' Residency program. The collaboration brought together our shared interests in sound and resonance, the body, and the world with our creative methods. We embraced the differences in our experimental processes and performance: my exploration of acoustic properties of materials and objects used direct actions and digital processing within a highly resonant space while Helen employed a Cagean system of indeterminacy based on architectural dimensions of the building as instructions to perform the resonance of voice and the body. In performance, the electro-acoustic tones of my situated instrument mixed with Helen's vocal methods. We performed in separate spaces: the performance was simultaneously an experiment, a conceptual premise, and a technical problem. Helen performed acoustic vocal sound directly to the audience while moving through the space; I performed from a room beneath the event space, my performance transmitted as live sound and moving image. The relationship was one-directional and non-reciprocal: Helen was able to see and hear me while I had no access to her vocalizations or actions.

The conditions for performance explored limitations and freedom using enabling constraints in an open process. I was free to improvise on my situated instrument, adding to the resonant acoustic space of her site but I could not hear Helen. Meanwhile, Helen was able to hear me, giving her the freedom to listen and respond however, she was bound in her own performance by the numbers and instructions of her vocal score. The situation provided rich possibilities for performance: the properties of Helen's voice (body soundings) became synchronized with, or separated from, the sonic properties of my materials (sounding bodies); the human voice became a vehicle for the creation of

sound art while the sounding objects became performers; organic and electronic sound and performing bodies merged as acoustic sound and processed sound, connecting proximity and distance, and sound and silence.

After the performance, my situated instrument remained in situ as an interactive installation. A video of our co-performance of the instrument functioned as a set of instructions for users. The project was developed during a residency at PAVED Arts, Saskatoon, in 2019. The documentation simulates our performance as split-screen video.



Figure 11. Collaboration with Helen Pridmore, *Sounding Bodies* | *Body Soundings*, PAVED Arts, Saskatoon 2019. Video still. Documentation courtesy of PAVED Arts.

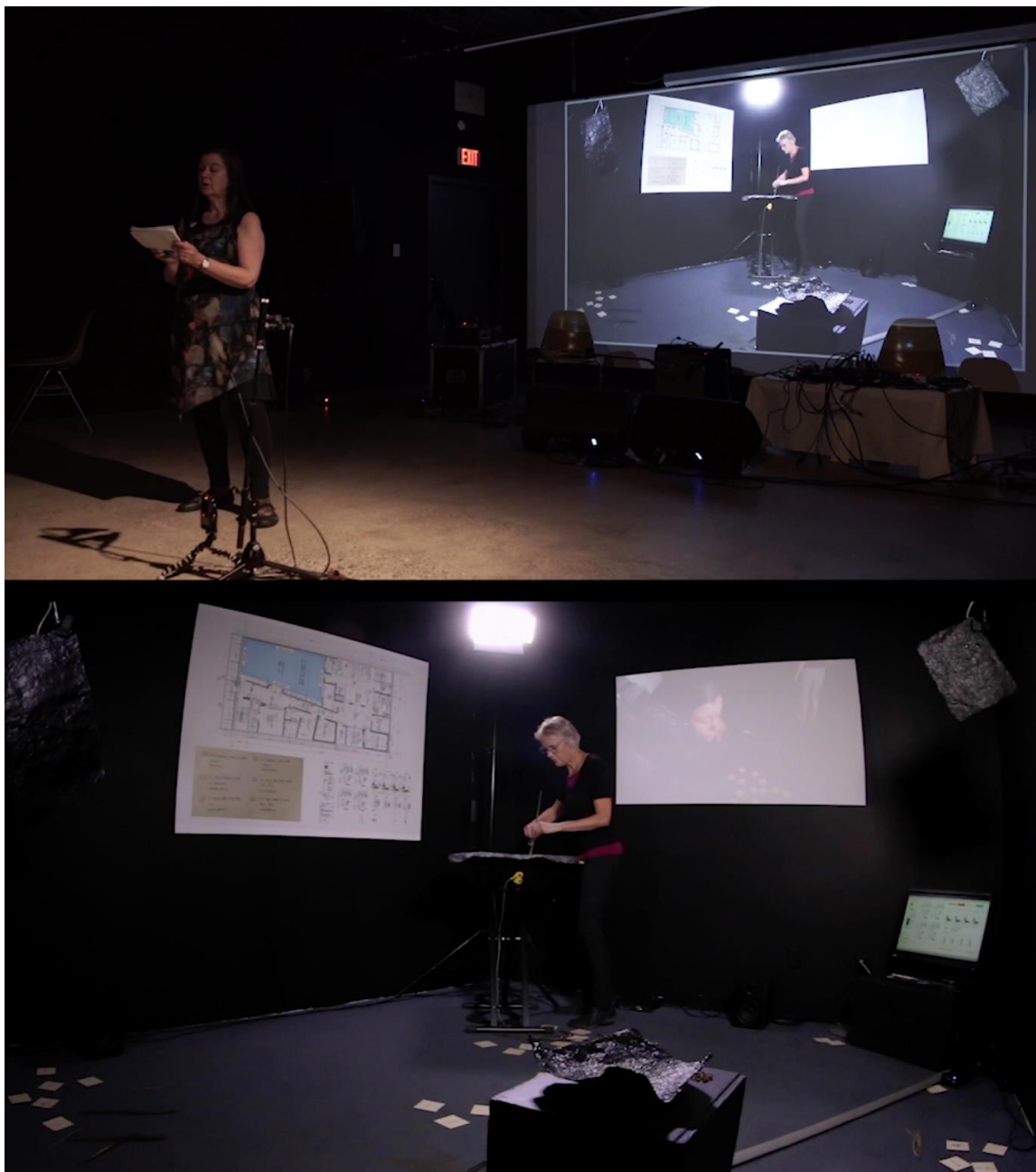


Figure 12. Documentation of performance with Helen Pridmore. *Sounding Bodies | Body Soundings, Sounds Like 9: Real Sound*, PAVED Arts and Unheard Sound Collective, Saskatoon, 2019. Video still. Documentation courtesy of PAVED Arts.

Link 4. Time-based Media: Video, Audio, and Website. *Sounding Bodies | Body Soundings*, 2019.

Video: <https://vimeo.com/363055878>.

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-18693230/soundingbodies>.

Website: <https://www.ellenmoffat.ca/soundingbodies/>.

Chapter 4: Other Than Silence

Allegheny Commons Park West, Pittsburgh, 2019.

Half-way across the park, the rain began. I opened my umbrella, then stopped, to listen. The taut nylon membrane doubled as a shelter from the rain and a soundboard that amplified the raindrops as percussive sonic events of varying tones, amplitudes, and rhythms. The quotidian object transformed into a personal acoustic chamber. Beyond the enclosure of the ad-hoc parabolic speaker, raindrops on Lake Elizabeth caused asynchronous sonic pings on the water's surface. Their impact generated nodes of expanding concentric circles that intersected and multiplied. These sonic events and visual traces mixed with the pings on the umbrella's surface to produce a synesthetic symphony in a park for a small audience.²⁷⁷ The coincidence of water, sound, and listening was the prelude for the audio installation of Rolf Julius's *Music for a Garden* in the courtyard of The Mattress Factory.²⁷⁸

Shin Nakagawa draws parallels

between Julius's thoughts about music as sound and concept and John Cage's approach to sound as small sound and small music. Nakagawa describes Cage's use of small sound as a reaction to the noise of the war: "The clamour of war is the language of authority and power."²⁷⁹ He calls *4'33"* (1952) a political decision that led to Cage's aesthetics of listening as "an expression of non-sound." Nakagawa aligns Julius's thinking about

²⁷⁷ Listening to small sounds from beneath an umbrella evokes an image of a 1982 "Concert for a Frozen Lake" in Berlin by Rolf Julius. The audience stands on a frozen lake and the shoreline, listening from beneath their umbrellas. *Rolf Julius Small Sound (Grau)*, ed. Bernd Schulz and Hans Gercke (Heidelberg: Kehrer Verlag, 1995), 38.

²⁷⁸ The Mattress Factory is a contemporary art museum, established in 1977 as a live-work artist space to foster development of the art community. Its focus is installation art some of which are permanent site-specific installations. *Music for a Garden* is a site-specific work created for the courtyard of The Mattress Factory in 1996.

²⁷⁹ Shin Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," in *Rolf Julius Small Music (Grau)*, 164.

sounds with Cage's aesthetic position while questioning some of Julius's language. Whether Julius's rejection of sounds "which are puffed up with their own importance" and "loud sounds to which we are all forced to listen" are political is questionable for Nakagawa.²⁸⁰ I agree. For Julius, "...there is not all that much difference between large and small... Perhaps, a large work is smaller than a small work."²⁸¹ The paradox of Julius's language does not clarify the work. Julius's quixotic terms for his small music and small sound suggest the koan-like ambiguity of Cage. Nakagawa suggests that Julius's music consists of sound and concept without being "concept art" because Julius's artwork relates to its surroundings.²⁸² "His style is to make some very small addition to what already exists."²⁸³ Julius's thinking is integrated into his small music as a relationship to the world. "I do not want to introduce a whole lot of new stuff into this earth. The earth is full up already. If we work carefully with small things, it is better for the whole system of the earth."²⁸⁴ To me, Julius's consciousness is ecological.

The "electrically or electronically produced"

cello tones and interval buzzers of Julius's small sound works create what Frank Hilberg calls a "sound biotope," a synthesis of bios (life) and tope (place).²⁸⁵ The biotope evokes Haraway's concept of natureculture consisting of inseparable "ecological relationships that are both biophysically and socially formed."²⁸⁶ Julius's sounds are between, in-between, or neither/nor. In the courtyard of The Mattress Factory, the small sounds of

²⁸⁰ Nakagawa questions whether 'political' is the appropriate of the word. Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," 164.

²⁸¹ Correspondence between Julius and Nakagawa, (January 28, 1992). Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," 163.

²⁸² Nakagawa argues that concept art separates art from its surroundings. Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," 163.

²⁸³ Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," 164.

²⁸⁴ Correspondence between Julius and Nakagawa, (February 19, 1992). Nakagawa, "Fragments for Julius," 164.

²⁸⁵ The liner notes written by Frank Hilberg are of Julius's work produced from 1992 to 1998. These sound biotopes have clear affinity with *Music for a Garden*. Frank Hilberg, "Rolf Julius's wonderful world of small sounds," *julius (halb) schwarz* (Berlin, Klanggalerie im Haus des Rundfunks, 1997).

²⁸⁶ Nicolas Malone and Kathryn Ovenden, "Natureculture," *The International Encyclopedia of Primates*, ed. Augustín Fuentes (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781119179313.wbprim0135>.

Music for a Garden are diffused to multiple speakers positioned at varying heights on a 4-storey wall (their visibility obscured by vines) and on stairwell landings external to the building. These small sounds are barely audible. The nuanced drones and sonic manipulations of Julius's sound biotope are indistinguishable from that which they are not due to the ambient sound of street traffic, airplanes, wind, rain, and human activity. The particularities and peculiarities of his techno-botanical tones are absorbed into quotidian sounds of the urban garden.²⁸⁷

By comparison,

on a home stereo system, the recording reveals layers of machinic squeaks and creaks of grating, invented, relentless, techno-organic, small sonic becomings. The ambiguous presence of Julius's sound in the courtyard might be considered as a "very small addition to what already exists," in which case the addition is barely audible. The deterioration of the installation speakers impacts the fidelity of the signal, but the sound itself was transmitted and audible in close proximity to a speaker. However, when my ear was close to the speaker, the spatiality of the soundscape in the garden was lost. The result was my detachment and disinterest in the sonic real, although not as a conceptual proposition. His subtle, small sounds blend with quotidian sound of the environs. Within this acoustic reality, the small sounds of Julius's sound biotope are conceptual and potential. I listen to the soundscape in the courtyard, knowing cognitively that his small sounds are within this soundscape, despite their near inaudibility. Experientially, the quiet small sounds of Julius within loud small sounds of the courtyard sound are inaudible. The sonic distinctions are absorbed into the soundscape of the courtyard. Whether this was intentional or circumstantial is moot.

Within the courtyard

²⁸⁷ The audio system has not been upgraded since its installation; in 2019, the quality of the audio output was mediocre. The need for maintenance of permanent audio installations presents a small predicament for galleries about the temporal limit for media work or acceptance of technological entropy. The changing quality of the sound can be considered as part of the life cycle of technology. Similar to the changing urban soundscape which has become noisier over time, the sound of Julius's work has decreased in amplitude due to the ambient sound or the environment, the technological life cycle, or a combination of both.

of The Mattress Factory, Julius's sound became subsumed into the ambient soundscape. The ambience of his sound is different than the ambient music of Brian Eno who intentionally collapses the distinctions between sounds to create an ambient environment of "the colour of the light and the sound of the rain as part of the ambience of the environment."²⁸⁸ The ambience of Julius's sound biotope might be a consequence of a changing soundscape over time. The work was commissioned by The Mattress Factory in 1996, a time that coincided with revitalization efforts in the neighbourhood. In 2019, the small sounds of *Music for a Garden* are absorbed into the soundscape of the changing urban environment. Shifting levels of ambient sound may have reduced the balance of sound artwork and environmental sound.

For Cage, active listening

engaged with the "moment of sound's becoming."²⁸⁹ LaBelle considers Cage's approach to sound as a call for a specificity of listening with an emphasis on both the work itself and the self-reflective awareness of the listener to the conditions of operations "to raise awareness on an individualized, liberating level: to engage subjective interpretation and the individual ear."²⁹⁰ For Yvonne Rainer, Cage's "non-hierarchical, indeterminate organization" was a gift to conceptual and contextual practice in the 1960s and 70s, but the absence of "selectivity and control" was not.²⁹¹ For Rainer, Cage's embrace of chance and "refusal of meaning" was an abandonment to a "Higher Authority."²⁹² She regards his non-signifying practice as "anterior to language – without mind, without desire, without differentiation, with finitude."²⁹³ Both LaBelle and Rainer believe that Cage overlooked the political dimensions of his own work: "[B]y insisting on the

²⁸⁸ Eno's intention in mixing the distant and foreground sound was to propose a new way of hearing music. Seth Kim-Cohen, *Against Ambience and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016), 28.

²⁸⁹ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 9.

²⁹⁰ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 10.

²⁹¹ Non-hierarchical practices align with feminist consciousness and the interconnectivity of Braidotti's nomadic consciousness. Yvonne Rainer, "Looking Myself in the Mouth," *A Woman Who... Essays* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 88.

²⁹² Rainer, *A Woman Who... Essays*, 97.

²⁹³ Rainer, *A Woman Who... Essays*, 90.

materiality and specificity of sound... [Cage] often missed the intensities and social and cultural structures that *precede* listening and lend to the moment of listening.”²⁹⁴

By opening the window

of the concert hall, Cage expanded sound as material for music to include everyday sound, chance sonic events, and silence.²⁹⁵ Voegelin approaches Cage’s silence as a sonic condition that engages the listener in music rather than in sound.²⁹⁶ “Cage’s interest in silence lies in establishing every sound within the musical register. It does not invite a listening to sound as sound but to all sound as music.”²⁹⁷ For Voegelin, the silence of *4’33”* is a musical silence, rather than sonic silence, meaning it is framed by musical conventions of the concert hall and musical structures of harmonies, intervals, scoring, and counting. She argues that the inclusion of all sounds within the musical register results in “the outline of silence rather than its materiality.”²⁹⁸ In contrast, she proposes a contemporary notion of silence that listens to “small sounds, tiny sounds, quiet and loud sounds out of any context, musical, visual or otherwise.”²⁹⁹ She advocates that small sounds include the listener in their production rather than noise which deafens the listener to only its sounds.³⁰⁰ The quietness of a beach at night in contrast to the deafening roar of its noise during the day allows her to hear herself—“it opens my ears to hear myself

²⁹⁴ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 51.

²⁹⁵ Cage’s *4’33”* is a three-movement composition that was first performed in 1952 on piano. The score consists of instructions for the performer whose actions consist of setting a timer, closing the cover of the piano’s keyboard, and sitting still until the movement has ended. He then repeats these actions for the duration of *4’33”*.

²⁹⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 82.

²⁹⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 80.

²⁹⁸ Voegelin considers both Cage’s *4’33”* and Duchamp’s *Fountain* as seminal works that shifted discourse of contemporary art. These works are framed by the musical and visual aesthetics of their respective institutional structures and strictures. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 80-81.

²⁹⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 81.

³⁰⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 82.

listen.”³⁰¹ My initial reading of Voegelin’s listening as a solipsistic position is superficial. Her listening is relational, social, and collective.

Silence and noise

are elements of communication. For Voegelin, “[s]ilence is not the absence of sound but the beginning of listening.”³⁰² She proposes that silence is the basis for language to develop “as a contingent and passing mode of exchange.”³⁰³ Silence opens the possibility of speech with contingency as a collective exchange with “fleeting moments of shared meaning rather than with an *a priori* language base.”³⁰⁴ For her, silence offers the conditions for communication to occur: “[...] silence’s path toward communication does not demonstrate an opposition to noise. Rather it arises out of noise’s sensitive solitude and its acute and bodily understanding of one’s responsibility towards any exchange.”³⁰⁵ She contrasts silence with noise which she considers as the desire to communicate, not the vocabulary of speaking: “What we share in noise is the desire to communicate, however, not the system of speaking.”³⁰⁶ The relationship of sonic subjectivity to the objective world in silence is the basic condition of her aesthetics and philosophy of sound art.³⁰⁷

To unpack silence and listening,

I transpose Voegelin’s ideas to embodiment and new materialism. The sonic subject listens in silence to sound itself as an (inter)active and generative process. The internalization of sound as an embodiment of the objective world suggests the phenomenological subject situated in the world in sound. The listening subject is actively

³⁰¹ I question the accuracy of this example: the beach can be noisy at night or quiet during the day. That said, the reduced distraction due to darkness facilitates listening by obscuring visual details. Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 79.

³⁰² Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

³⁰³ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 87.

³⁰⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 87.

³⁰⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 87.

³⁰⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 87.

³⁰⁷ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 82.

engaged with sound. The production of sense and meaning is the responsibility of the listener—“where my subjectivity is at the centre of the sound production, audible to myself.”³⁰⁸ To rephrase, the generative aspect of listening starts with the subject as the centre of the sound production and with her reception of signal. The sonic subject mixes external sounds with her internal sounds through intersubjective listening. The potential of the generative process for becoming “the soundscape through my listening to it and in turn the soundscape is what I listen to, perpetually in the present” evokes the Deleuzian subject as an enfolding of external stimulus and the unfolding outwards of affects.³⁰⁹ However, Voegelin places a limiter on the potential for transformation, namely the transience of sound. The intersubjectivity of the sonic subject with the world is a relationship “passing through my ears.”³¹⁰ It might be argued that listening “in the present” of sound is an existential metaphor for becoming. For Voegelin, listening is entwined with the heard as an individual act of sense-making, contingency, relationality, and intersubjectivity. This recalls Merleau-Ponty’s notion of being-honeyed as the sticky viscosity of listening, sense, and silence as relations. If silence is a precursor for communication, what does this mean in terms of who or what we are listening to? Silence affirms sonic subjectivity in relation to the objective world. What’s ambiguous is silence in the collective sense of this objective world.

The slippage between

the terms ‘small sounds’ and ‘silence’ is complicated.³¹¹ Voegelin’s “[s]ilence confirms the soundscape as a sonic life-world, and clarifies the notion that sound is a relationship not between things, but just a relationship, passing through my ears.”³¹² The listener is in the “perpetual present.” What’s not clear is whether this transience of sound is the beginning of communication, non-sense, or an aesthetic moment. Voegelin differentiates

³⁰⁸ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

³⁰⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

³¹⁰ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 84.

³¹¹ Voegelin’s proposal for contemporary silence includes unstructured, unorganized, or quotidian sound.

³¹² Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83-84.

between silence as small sounds of the world that the body senses and the sonic vacuum of Cage's inner body in the anechoic chamber "where the vacuum denies external sounds a path to the ear and the sound of blood pumping through the body and the tingling of the nervous system starts to be audible."³¹³ For her, listening is an active relationship with the world beyond the listener that implicates the listener directly in receiving and processing the signal. "Silence reveals to me my own sounds: my head, my stomach, my body becomes their conductor."³¹⁴ For me, this gives agency to the listener, with an emphasis on the subjectivity of the listener rather than the relations between sound, the objective world, and listening.

In a different passage,

Voegelin recognizes the doubt that arises from silence of the sonic life-world. For her, the relationship is complex, intertwined, and reciprocal. "The reciprocal intertwining of the 'I' with the sonic life-world produces a transient and fleeting subject... [as] an ever passing and evolving subjectivity... as a formless sonic self."³¹⁵ Again, this connects to notions of transformation and becoming that result from silence and the transience of sound. The listener is in the centre of production, but unanchored. To anchor the body in listening, I use her analogy of the body as conductor to connect the agency of the listener in relation to other sonic life forms.³¹⁶

As a listener, small sounds

draw me as a listener outwardly toward them, similar to eavesdropping on a conversation. Small sounds disrupt the interiority of my introspection as an intersubjective encounter with small sounds as the other. The small sounds of drops of rain on the membrane of an umbrella and surface of the lake in the Allegheny Park are the result of the material conditions of 'what is,' here-and-now. Listening to these sounds requires my

³¹³ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

³¹⁴ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 83.

³¹⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 93.

³¹⁶ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 93.

participation in the production of meaning as sense and non-sense through acute attention to the unfolding of sonic events in the present moment as an encounter with the sonic life-world. My engagement with events and effects of natural occurrence and circumstances connects my intersubjectivity and situation within the world. However, I do not recall the sounds generated within my body. What this means in terms of intersubjectivity is not obvious.

To repeat, in silence,

listening and intersubjectivity intersect as relations with the objective world. In listening to silence, the sonic subject engages with external sounds of the world; the generative process of listening includes sound received as well as sounds generated, internally, by the listener. The process is intersubjective: exterior (received) sounds of the world mix with interior (generated) sounds of the body. Meaning is contingent and provisional. The intersubjectivity of Voegelin's sonic subject confirms Merleau-Ponty's subject (listening) as a being-in-the-world who constructs meaning through sense and nonsense.³¹⁷ The production of meaning generated through active listening to the liveness of sound in the present connects to the "living bond and communication" of the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty.³¹⁸ The sonic subject is situated in the sonic fluctuations of the world. Unaddressed by Voegelin is the shared responsibility of being shaped by history, culture, and society of feminist phenomenology. The place of sound—and silence—in these interpretations of phenomenology is an ongoing conversation.

"Silent sounds can be loud,

as much as noisy sounds can be quiet, but they do not deafen my body to anything but themselves, and instead include me in their production."³¹⁹ Voegelin's silence includes

³¹⁷ For Merleau-Ponty, language is at the border of sense and non-sense. Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, xi.

³¹⁸ In his critique of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, Merleau-Ponty proposed that man must develop a consciousness that is simultaneously objective and subjective in relation to the world. The dialectical relations of Marxist praxis are an active relationship. Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, xx.

³¹⁹ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 81-82.

both small and loud sounds. Sound artworks explore silence as small and loud sounds through themes of banality and repetition, the relation and correlation of light and sound, the porosity of outside/inside, cultural materiality, the colonial legacy, and performative works. Active listening to these sounds brings attention to spatial, social, and cultural contexts as relations of sound and space, the intersubjectivity of listening, cultural differences, and decolonial practices. Low on the decibel meter are the repetitive, amplified sweeping actions of crys cole's *sweeper* (2011); the intermodality of sound and electromagnetic waves of light rays of Martine H. Crispo's *Zoé T.: spectres et autres apparitions* (2016); the audio and video recordings of icebergs in Caroline Gagné's *Le bruit des icebergs* (2016); and the organized chaos of the sonic -kinetic sculptural installations of Jean-Pierre Gauthier's *Machines at Play* (2002-). At the upper end of the meter are the inaudible sound of Adrian Piper's *Catalysis IV* (1972), a performance on a bus in New York, a towel stuffed into her mouth; Rebecca Belmore's *Ayum-ee-aawach-Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother* (1991), a political protest and poetic action to address the land; the collaborative (non)performance by members of a non-existent band of Eleanor King and Andrew Mazerolle's *Rock and Roll* (2011); and Adam Basanta's *The Loudest Sound in the Room Experienced Very Quietly* (2015), an endless feedback loop of a communication system turned on itself.

This chapter leans toward small

and underheard sound with attention to ethics, context, and social-political relations using feminist and active listening practices. The projects are a kinetic sound installation by Anne-F Jacques and a proposal for site-specific, sound project by Jake Moore. These works use strategies of non-hierarchy, heterogeneity, the multiple, and active listening as relations of sound and silence. Both projects are located in Saskatoon, a prairie city in Saskatchewan where I have been based for almost two decades. My understanding of the communities, constituencies, temporalities, and cultural biases of the province is as a palimpsest of ecological, social, temporal, and cultural dynamics of the land and sky, of humans in relation to its vastness, of relations of Indigenous and settler cultures, and of temporalities that range from geological to circadian to Indigenous to agricultural cycles and rhythms with the ever-expansive, colonial project and its extractive economies. The

sound and silence within these two projects address different aspects of the social, ethical, and cultural context of place.

The eclectic assortment of organic, technological, and quotidian objects, materials, and detritus of Anne-F Jacques's *Fluid States* would fit with the "Objects" of Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons*.³²⁰ Electronic and mechanical (motors, controllers, circuit boards), found and repurposed materials (nails, a step ladder, honey comb, a cardboard box, books), and remainders (a leftover piece of gyproc, a defunct incandescent light bulb, a pencil stub) are the material components of her kinetic installation.³²¹ Jacques is a tinkerer; she repurposes old motors from "useless or broken machines." She finds their "idiosyncrasies: speed wheezing, burning smell, vibration, degrees of willingness."³²² Her heterogeneous constructions propose a collective of diverse subjectivities of seemingly casual juxtapositions of discrete elements. However, the organization is not haphazard: the separate parts are placed with deliberation and attention to their combined kinetic and sonic outcomes. In the installation, the variable speeds and rotations of motors are tuned in relation to the material elements to create evolving sounds of asynchronous rhythms of moving parts as a becoming, non-hierarchical collective of multiple sonic subjectivities. Jacques considers her work "assemblies"³²³ of "precarious or useless systems"³²⁴ in which sound is a component. "I first pursue an interaction improbable and oblique, between the materials and their particular way of moving, each in relation to the others. From what is generated in this encounter—vibration, movement, wear—I can decide to amplify a specific point, a

³²⁰ The playful juxtaposition of Jacques's materials and objects resonate with the Objects of Stein's experimental literary text. A suspended pencil hanging from an extended rotating cardboard arm sounds nails hammered into a piece of plywood on the floor; an incandescent light bulb becomes an acoustic chamber; a cardboard box functions as amplifier. In his introduction to the reprinted edition, McCaffery acknowledges that Stein's text had been variously called "meaningless... playful nonsense." Jacques's exploration of the acoustic potential in material and technological elements transforms everyday objects into the "meaningless" sonic "nonsense." Stein, *Tender Buttons*, ix.

³²¹ <https://vimeo.com/178374566>. The work was part of *SoundsLike VI, Echoing (Silent) Machines*, Saskatoon, July 2016, curated by Eric Mattson.

³²² Anne-F Jacques, *Roches rencontrées* (Les éditions Le laps, 2018), 45.

³²³ Jacques, *Roches rencontrées*, 43.

³²⁴ Jacques, *Roches rencontrées*, 54.

particular junction, and populate a corner of the space with this sound.”³²⁵ Jacques approaches material, mechanical, and sonic elements in relation to space. In this case, the space is a storefront with a wall of windows at the street level, giving a sightline as well as a resonant surface for her subtle tonalities. Her material sensibility and synesthetic aesthetics of her work resonate with Julius’s biotope and Haraway’s natureculture. Similar to Julius’s synthesis of life and place and Haraway’s inseparability of nature and culture, Jacques’s work is positioned between the ecological and technological. Her assemblies of repurposed technology and found materials propose an alternate social world of multiple, techno-organic nodes without a centre. The decentred heterogeneity of her work supports the relational becoming of Braidotti’s feminist consciousness, as if.

The sonorous outcomes of

Jacques’s motors, objects, and matter have dialogic affinity with the becoming soundings of Yves Lomax’s musical–or twittering–tree. For Lomax, the sounding tree is about becoming and the becoming-other as a journey of becoming that is forever in transition.³²⁶ The “musical tree” gives flesh to the concept of becoming: a tree of “small brown birds in an agitated tree quivers sonorously” is a continual passing of pine cone seeds and chirping from one to the other. Lomax calls the transformation a zone of indiscernibility: “both become other than what they are whilst remaining, in one respect what they are.”³²⁷ She considers the becoming soundings of these multiple entities a *conjugation*.

As a conjugation,

the musical–or twittering-tree–is an additive mix of birds in a tree eating pine cone seeds. The becoming is a double act that is irreducible “to either bird or pine cone.”³²⁸ Rather

³²⁵ Jacques, *Roches rencontrées*, 54.

³²⁶ Yves Lomax, *Sounding the Event: Escapades in Dialogue and Matters of Art, Nature and Time* (London, EN: I.B Taurus, 2005), 7.

³²⁷ Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 19.

³²⁸ Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 20.

than a “transformation of a pine-cone into a chirping twittering bird” there is “a conjugation of both... [T]his conjugation was what made for, each evening, a becoming that quivered with the creation of musical being.”³²⁹ I understand the conjugation as the interconnection of live, material, and chance elements of circumstances and time with potential for becoming sonic. The specific pine tree and the birds are autonomous entities that coincide in time and space: “...the tall pine-cone-issuing tree and the mass of small brown birds had a capacity—a power—to affect each other and enter into composition and make something happen between them, which belonged to neither.”³³⁰

Lomax’s question of

whether the birds or the tree were twittering points to the interconnectivity of events, effects, and affects.³³¹ The twittering is the result of the combined actions, interactions, circumstances, and coincidences. The twittering cannot be predicted, scripted, or controlled. Lomax’s notion of twittering as becoming is neither/nor; the sound is not a direct result of one active element, but the intertwining of discrete elements without prescription or prediction. The sonic outcome is a double act of autonomous elements. My license with Lomax’s conjugation is in overlooking the difference between sound occurrences in the natural world and creative acts which use generative processes for sound through electro-acoustic devices. Jacques carefully juxtaposes material and electronic elements as constructions. She tunes the work by adjusting the motors’ rotary actions to create non-uniform rotational cycles. These tunings set up the conditions for actions and interactions of the multiple nodes that evoke the sonic becoming of Lomax’s twittering tree as a collective of mechanical-material twitterings that sound through the coincidence of their interactions. The fluctuating small sounds of Jacques’s techno-organic constructions are the result of technical and material juxtapositions. The tones, cycles, and repetitions depend on the constituent elements and their differences.

³²⁹ Lomax’s poetic text muses on the notion of the event. The book unfolds as stream-of-consciousness through reflection, encounter, and dialogue. Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 20.

³³⁰ Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 20.

³³¹ Lomax, *Sounding the Event*, 20.

Together, the heterogeneous sounds of these components propose a collective of multiple subjectivities.

Underlying the techno-organic

aesthetics of Jacques's work is an ethical awareness that is manifest through her repurposing and reuse of materials and motors, her emphasis on process rather than product, her vocabulary of impermanence and transience, and her provisional method of production.³³² She arrives on location with a tool kit of essential motors, electronic controllers, and select material items, then reconfigures the installation in situ through improvisation: a step ladder is borrowed, books are employed as shims, and gyproc is sourced from a recycled building supplies store.³³³ The interaction of assorted elements proposes a becoming collective of subjectivities—or a collective of becoming subjectivities—that transforms Lomax's twitterings into a techno-organic conjugation. Jacques's techno-organic "assembly" are not consumer objects. Her emphasis on process, the provisionality of her form, and the multiple subjectivities of her constructions propose a playful interconnectivity without full control of the sonic outcomes: "[...] the materials involved can refuse to move, or insist on falling into pieces; knock into each other without making any noise, rub without entering into vibration, stay mute or on the contrary, become too predictably chatty."³³⁴ Listening to these differentiated sounds extends Voegelin's notion of silence as "the beginning of communication as the basis of language" to the collective "as a contingent and passing mode of exchange."³³⁵ The conjugation supports the chance occurrence through action and interaction of constituent elements to generate sound. The absence of control of these small sounds and their occurrence supports the fluctuation of sound, meaning, and contingency. Active listening

³³² Jacques's aesthetics and ethics follows the DIY (do-it-yourself) method of production with its autonomy, self-production, and rejection of the commodity of consumer culture as well as activities that include repairing, repurposing, and recycling. Her use of recycled technologies refuses to embrace the new of consumer economies.

³³³ Jacques and I shared the storefront space of the Saskatoon Symphony office for the festival. Our conversations during the installation period and the festival gave me insight into her work.

³³⁴ Jacques, *Roches rencontrées*, 54.

³³⁵ Voegelin, *Listening to Noise and Silence*, 87.

to these sounds involves the listener in the production of the “playful nonsense” of Stein’s experimental text.

Small sounds draw attention

to difference, the other, and multiplicity of the collective. I turn from listening to the silence of the small sounds of DIY sound art to active listening practices and the silencing of cultural identity. These practices have potential to disrupt the systemic values of cultural capital with other values, voices, and currencies. Patriarchy, normativity, corporatism and globalization, and free market economies are fueled by sexism, resource extraction, labour exploitation, and profit-driven enterprises often supported by neo-liberal, or right-wing, or authoritative ideologies. Patriarchal structures maintain social hierarchies through political policies and histories of exclusivity and exclusion. Sound art practices challenge the commercialization of artistic production through diverse sounds of unheard, marginalized, or underrepresented voices. What and whose sounds are (not) sounding? What rhythms, tonalities, and cadences are (not) audible? Who controls production? Who is listening? Contextual practices reveal “what is usually unseen, unheard, or unknown so as to investigate and uncover through an explicitly interested scrutiny, the very structural, institutional, and aesthetic presence of that which is a given.”³³⁶ To recall, for LaBelle, sound is always marked. Sound is contingent on the conditions in which it is presented; there is no disinterestedness or detachment from context.³³⁷ Unheard sound is muted.

Active listening practices

integrate strategies of feminist and contextual practice within collective projects. Researcher-activists Lucia Farinati and Claudia Firth ask “what listening can do and what it can produce under different conditions. What emerges is an exploration of listening as a process of transformation, creation, and action.”³³⁸ Of interest in their listening practice

³³⁶ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 52.

³³⁷ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, 51.

³³⁸ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 10.

is the potential of listening for social change within sound art practices. Their thinking is grounded in feminist consciousness-raising practices from the 1960s as well as the social listening practice of Pauline Oliveros who distinguished between hearing as involuntary and listening as voluntary acts.³³⁹ The feminist intersection of the personal and the political and feminist epistemologies of listening and speaking bring ethics and politics to listening as a social and relational practice with potential for social change.³⁴⁰

“Listening is always

through the ear of the other.”³⁴¹ Activist artists Janna Graham and Robert Sember of Ultra-red sound art collective employ active listening as a strategic listening practice and method to connect the ethical potential of listening to social movements in projects that range from HIV/AIDS to anti-racism and from immigration issues and to participatory community development.³⁴² They acknowledge the influence of feminist consciousness on Ultra-red as well as the AIDS crisis with its attention to embodiment, listening, and collective sharing.³⁴³ Graham calls listening a process in which “neither sound-making nor listening are an end, but part of a generative cycle” as an ongoing process of analysis.³⁴⁴ Sember translates listening into language using psychoanalysis and codification.³⁴⁵ He connects the intersubjectivity of listening to the other with Merleau-Ponty’s intertwining which “opens the space of the political within the phenomenological.”³⁴⁶ Similar to Voegelin, Graham and Sember consider the relationship of the listener and generative meaning as the interconnectivity of small

³³⁹ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 4 & 16.

³⁴⁰ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 10 & 11.

³⁴¹ Robert Sember in Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 39.

³⁴² Ultra-red is an international collective of activist artists whose work includes sound art, workshops, radio broadcasts, performances, recordings, texts, public actions and listening practice as cultural analysis. Janna Graham and Robert Sember are members of the London chapter. Founded in Los Angeles in 1994 by two AIDS activists, Ultra-red has affiliates in North American and Europe.
<http://www.ultrared.org/mission.html>.

³⁴³ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 36.

³⁴⁴ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 37.

³⁴⁵ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 37.

³⁴⁶ Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 38.

sounds and its potential for communication. By situating listening within a social-political context, Sember affirms and politicizes listening. Active listening requires acute attention to the social-political context of silence or small sounds.

Normative perception is abetted

by systemic structures, hierarchical thinking, and institutionalized thinking and values. The potential of active listening to shift consciousness and perception is a process of transformation that includes creation and action. Of interest to me is the non-utopic language of listening practices: its language is grounded in concerns such as social-political realities, gender relations, and race issues in daily life. The relational, social, and political dimension of active listening and the potential for transformation intersect with LaBelle's proposal for the sociality of sound art to understand "not only the harmonies but also [to] the dissonances between place, self, and their interactions."³⁴⁷ LaBelle connects the listener to her surroundings and listeners to each other through the relational dimension of sound and space, perceptual dynamics and context, the multiplicity of perspectives, and the sociality of sound.³⁴⁸ A sound event that occurs 'here' is received 'there' by one listener and 'over there' by another listener. The spatial dimension of sound expands beyond borders and boundaries. Active listening starts with awareness of the spatial and temporal dimension of sound: 'here and now' (sound event) connects with 'there and then' (sound reception) in a collective space. Sound affirms space as shared; it is our commons.

The history of colonialism

in Canada is a litany of silences, ethical and political oversights of the rights of sovereign nations, broken treaties, cultural repression, racism, and white power and privilege.³⁴⁹ Colonial history is marked by institutional structures that produce and reproduce settler perceptions of white privilege. The fact that relations between sovereign nations are

³⁴⁷ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, xvi.

³⁴⁸ LaBelle, *Background Noise*, x-xi.

³⁴⁹ Being less than equal can transfer into empathy for the other.

neither given nor permanent means there is potential for change. Indigenous activists and artists such as Idle no More, Land Back, the REDress Project, A Tribe Called Red, Rebecca Belmore, Ruth Cuthand, and many others continue to expose the legacy of settler-colonial and Indigenous relations through their social actions and artistic practice. In a public talk, Belmore was asked why she focused exclusively on Indigenous content; her response was: “I cannot not do this work.”³⁵⁰ Stó:lō/Skwah writer Dylan Robinson calls the settler-colonial mindset an “extractive” mentality of “hungry listening,” a form of perception that refers to a “settler’s starving orientation.”³⁵¹ The term, hungry listening, is “derived from two Halq’eméylem words: *shxwelítemelh* (the adjective for settler or white person’s methods/things) and *xwélalà:m* (the word for listening). *shxwelítemelh* comes from the word *xwélalà:m* (white settler) and more precisely means ‘starving person.’”³⁵² Robinson uses the words separately and together to address positionalities of the listening encounter from Indigenous, settler, and other perspectives. When placed together, *shxwelítemelh xwélalà:m* becomes hungry listening as a name for settler colonial forms of perception that “does not simply reduce to ‘listening through whiteness;’ it is a state of perception irreducible to racial identity.”³⁵³ Robinson extends the notion of hungry listening as an extraction mentality to colonial and normative values within the contemporary arts and cultural production in which Indigenous artists participate.³⁵⁴ He advocates for listening with attention to positionality and intersectionality to dismantle these structures. Class, race, identity, and sexuality affect listening. He asks how we understand the world in a positional and as intersectional way. He offers a contemporary proposal for hungry listening as a mixed or in-between space.

³⁵⁰ Belmore’s artist talk was at the University of Saskatchewan in 2008.

³⁵¹ Historically, the reference is the encounter of Indigenous with settlers in search of gold in the mid-19th c. In his book, *Hungry Listening*, Dylan Robinson presents a decolonial critique of the performing arts in which Indigenous artist participate. His attention is to music. His analysis brings contextual listening practices together with settler colonial and Indigenous perceptions through a decolonial practice of listening.

³⁵² Halq’eméylem is the language of the Stó:lō/Skwah culture of the southern coast of what is now British Columbia.

Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 2.

³⁵³ Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 2-3.

³⁵⁴ Robinson addresses ontological and epistemological stakes in listening through pairing Indigenous and settler perspectives to bring positionality to active listening. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 2.

The decolonial sound project,

of-the-now: Decolonial Imaginings, co-curated by Mitch Renaud of *of-the-now* collective and Robinson invited six new music settler composers and sound artists to complete “Imagined Compositions” using a “decolonial dialogic” approach to generate “ideas through conversations that then spill into new forms” as a speculative space.³⁵⁵ The process involved reading Robinson’s *Hungry Listening*, workshops, creation, and collective workshopping as “conversations around questions of settler-colonialism and compositions as well as sound art practices” using a collective creative process for composition development.³⁵⁶ Artist-composers were tasked to “identify and demonstrate their specific responsibilities to decolonial work, distinct from the work of resurgence by Indigenous artists.”³⁵⁷ The ‘new forms’ were speculative compositions by settler composers. Discussions, workshops and imagined compositions were recorded and presented online as a virtual platform, pedagogical tool, and archive. This is the context for the imagined composition project by Jake Moore.

Topography of Listening

is a score for a site-specific sound performance as a contextual work by intermedia artist and curator, Jake Moore. Her “imagined composition” starts with a splash: Moore is in the South Saskatchewan River in Saskatoon.³⁵⁸ Her soothing voice tells the “score as story

³⁵⁵ *of-the-now* is a sound collective that organizes concerts, festivals, and live events online as independent events and partnerships. <https://www.of-the-now.ca> The collective initiated the commissioning project with Dylan Robinson that became Decolonial Imaginings. Participating artists/composers were Jake Moore, Jocelyn Morlock, Luke Nickel, Juliet Palme, Mitch Renaud, and Kelly Ruth. Workshops and public presentations occurred from July to October 2020. The online component was developed and managed by Jeff Morton in Saskatchewan. In his book, Robinson sets up “sonic encounters between particular perceptual logics, and between particular bodies, within a larger conceptual framework of critical listening positionality.” He cites numerous examples of colonial notions of temporality, choreography, and aesthetics in the concert hall and theatre throughout the book. Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 2.

³⁵⁶ Robinson credits his workshopping process to Daniel Sacks’ “Imagined Theatres: Writing for a Theoretical Stage” as a methodology for “thought experiments” and the potential and (im)possibility of theatre. <http://imaginedtheatres.com/south-africa/>. “Decolonial Imaginings – Curator Introduction” <https://www.of-the-now.ca/decolonialimaginings/>.

³⁵⁷ <https://www.of-the-now.ca/decolonialimaginings/>.

³⁵⁸ The score is presented as an audio work.

[to] bring it into our imaginations.” The imagined composition unfolds as context, geography, and history of human and nonhuman elements of the river. Her spoken word proposal contextualizes the project within place moving the listener through time and space listening to an imagined performance on a barge pulled by a tug boat. moore does not address contemporary cultural interactions or frictions. She positions herself as a settler, visitor, and guest within this context. She begins with the real and symbolic importance of the river as the spine. moore situates herself within this context, “co-constituted within the personal and geographic” with awareness that “space is delimited by certain structures.”³⁵⁹

Her question is

how to come to know a place. She recognizes the white settler tendency to assume a position of universality, meaning they do not position themselves in space. As a newcomer to the city, she takes up her “obligations to learn this place, this land, and its people and to contribute to their care, but also to learn (her) place within this ecology” in response to the hospitality of elders who greeted her when she arrived.³⁶⁰ moore navigates what she calls the “shifting landscape” of human, nonhuman, linguistic, and ideological elements as a means of positioning herself within social, political, and environmental elements of this topos with its temporalities of ecological, Indigenous, settler and scientific languages and quotidian events. She weaves stories of the river together with naming conventions of niwan and settlers. In Cree, the river is called *kisiskāciwani-sīpiy* (“it is flowing river” and “warm wind”); in English, bridges are named after a prime minister, a mayor, or a hockey player; and in cartography, spatial coordinates are numbers and degrees—53° 12' 17" N, 105° 45' 49" W—as a universalist proposition.

³⁵⁹ Imagined Compositions: jake moore: *Topography of Listening*, <https://www.of-the-now.ca/small-group-sessions/>.

³⁶⁰ Moore recently moved to Saskatoon to take a position as Director of the USask Art Galleries at the University of Saskatchewan. Imagined Compositions: *jake moore: Topography of Listening*, <https://www.of-the-now.ca/decolonialimaginings/>.

The listener listens

to her imagined sound performance from a river bank as a barge pulled by a chugging tug boat moves east with the flow of the river's currents. The matching sonic frequencies of engines, cello, and voice generated on the moving barge mix with ambient sound of the environment before reaching the audience.³⁶¹ As a living entity of human and nonhuman, ecological, and temporal cycles, place-like sound-is marked with histories, ideologies, and structures of its past and present. moore recounts a familiar narrative of events, names, and perspectives of the river as an act of storytelling in which she, as narrator, is situated within the collective space of social-political histories, geographic code, and cultural and temporal differences. She listens to the language of this place. As a decolonial action, moore positions herself as a visitor to this place who learns its settler history by listening to the river, elders, and texts. The non-linearity and non-chronological approach of moore's storytelling destabilize and un-settle the chronology of settler time. The score moves the listener through past and present temporalities of space, sound, and place.

Listening to the score

of *Typology of Listening* as process connects with Graham and Sember's listening "through the ear of the other" and codification, transference, and translation as the beginning of language.³⁶² The social-political dimension of Graham and Sember's active listening as the beginning of language intersects with Voegelin's listening to silence as the beginning of communication. The small sounds of the ecological locale mix with sound generated on and by the moving barge and human-generated sound as intertwined relations with place. Listening to the small sounds of moore's contextual project engages with the language of the other which, in this case, is the river. moore listens to the river to learn its language. This might arguably be considered as a form of hungry listening.³⁶³

³⁶¹ Moore recognizes that audibility of these sounds may be reduced due to the ambient sound of wind, water, traffic, and the location of the listener.

³⁶² Farinati and Firth, *The Force of Listening*, 38-39.

³⁶³ I thank Christof Migone for this insight.

Listening to the temporalities and ecologies of the river from her positionality as a settler situated within its context is an acknowledgement of place, its inhabitants, and its stories. She learns its settler history. Active listening to social, environmental, and cultural temporalities evokes the “generative cycle” of Graham’s listening as a process rather than an end, with potential for change. Active listening to human and nonhuman temporalities, tonalities, and rhythms of place, its structures, and the other has potential to shift awareness and perception about collective space as shared space. Affirmation of the river as a public space for listening to the social, cultural, and ecological histories of place connects multiple subjectivities, ethics, and politics. Active listening to these sounds is part of the process of transformation. The decolonial strategy of listening positionally coincides with active listening to the other as the beginning of language and with non-hierarchical methods of feminist consciousness. Active listening to the sounds and silences of place politicizes listening by un-silencing history and re-sounding temporalities. Sounding the silence of place confirms how places are marked.

Interstice Five: Artwork

when the crickets hesitate, (2021)

Written on the Earth, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London (March 4 - April 17, 2021).

The sound environment is an inextricable mix of human, nonhuman, and technological tonalities. The intertwining of natural and cultural sounds as our sonic environment aligns with Donna Haraway's fused term of natureculture as the synthesis of the biophysical (nature) and the socially-formed (human) and with Rosi Braidotti's interconnectivity as the sustainability of life and ethical responsibility. In its sonic sensibility, *when the crickets hesitate* intersects with acoustic ecology, musique concrète, and the soundscape. The relationality of sound and active listening connects with feminist new materialism. The acoustic resonance of the gallery adds tonality to the sound composition as active relations of sound and space.

As a sound installation, *when the crickets hesitate* is an evolving composition with a techno-organic aesthetics.³⁶⁴ Speakers, organic matter, and raw signal cable splay over the gallery floor as proposal for the interconnectivity of natureculture. The soundscape is constructed from field recordings from land, air, and water in southwestern Ontario, modified as the sound objects of Pierre Schaeffer's musique concrète. The results are a stochastic mix of sensorial rhythms and sonic energies of insects, birds, motors, vehicles, wind, thunder, and waves. The intermingling of nonhuman and human sounds presents a sonic ecology of living forces and affect. Sounds of cicadas blend with boat motors interspersed with silence. The listener is immersed in a sonic space that is simultaneously

³⁶⁴ The context for this sound installation is the interdisciplinary intersection of art and engineering research into tornadoes and data collection. *Written on the Earth* is an interdisciplinary project that began with an invitation to a group of artists from the Northern Tornadoes Project, a research team at Western Engineering which is charting the evidence of tornadoes throughout Canada. These disciplines share an interest in data collection while they maintain separate vocabularies, analysis, and procedures for processing data as findings. The data in my work started with field recordings of cultural and natural small sounds made audible by the social and economic inactivity of Covid.

familiar and unfamiliar and located and dislocating. It is, perhaps, the lull before the storm.

when the crickets hesitate co-habits the gallery space with Eeva Siivonen's *Fugitive Lives*, a series of video animations of organic concretions that emerge from and retract into darkness on monitors placed on the floor. The visitor gazes downward while slowly navigating through an entanglement of image, sound, cables, and organic matter in a dark gallery. Our shared sensibility toward natureculture merges with our techno-organic, multi-sensorial aesthetics in an interconnected network of sound and image. Boundaries between our speculative worlds blur. Our works are becoming-one. The transformation occurred *in situ* with minimal advance planning. The relation recalls the neither/nor of Lomax's conjugation.³⁶⁵ In this instance, the conjugation transforms each work – two becoming one – while each work maintains its autonomy. A consideration of the conjugation as the coincidence of independent entities has potential for working with others and their differences as social transformation. This approach blurs boundaries as a non-hierarchical structure and method.

The experience with the works in the darkened gallery is centring and decentering. The visitor reorients within the becoming ecology – whether futuristic or a dystopic present – as a fragile ecological balance. The inter-sensoriality of listening and seeing enhances the embodied experience with the transience, ephemeral materiality of fluctuating sound and image as affect. The visitor is situated in the disturbance, becoming, and transformation of energy-matter of our techno-organic environment.

³⁶⁵ Yves Lomax's conjugation is elaborated in Chapter 3 of the thesis.



Figure 13. Documentation of sound installation. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021 in *Written on the Earth*, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, 2021. Image credit: Matt Truman.



Figure 14. Documentation of sound installation. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021 in *Written on the Earth*, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, (2021). Image credit: Matt Truman.

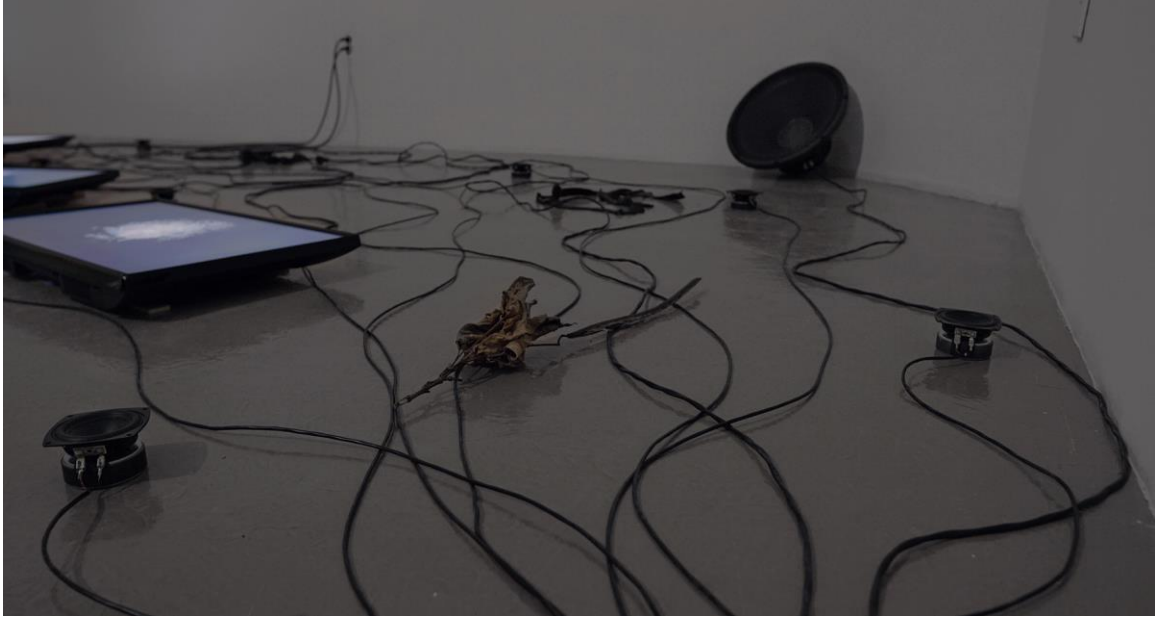


Figure 15. Documentation of sound installation. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021 in *Written on the Earth*, curated by Helen Gregory, McIntosh Gallery, London, (2021). Image credit: Matt Truman.

Link 5. Time-based Media: Audio and Website. *when the crickets hesitate*, 2021.

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/user-18693230/crickets-hesitate-9324>

Web: <https://www.ellenmoffat.ca/crickets/>

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The feminine sonic is a speculative proposition for an aural spacetime of listening as subjective and intersubjective engagement with the unfolding relations of sound and space, sounding bodies, and sonic fluctuation. We listen to the sense and nonsense of sound in the shared space and time of the sound event. The intersubjective engagement with sound (art) connects sounding bodies in a shared timespace. The sense we make from listening extends to the potential for becoming-sonic. This collection of diverse sound artworks listens to others and to the world as embodied experience, social relations, sonic becomings, and unsilencing. The featured sound artworks support difference and potential for transformation by listening to the sonic worlds of others in the symbolic space of the sound artwork. The project is not complete: it is becoming in its scope, constituency, definition, and audibility as an inquiry into sound, embodiment, and inter-subjectivity, with an ear to the presentfuture.

The relevance and urgency of the feminine sonic are in sounding the particular, the molecular, the subjective, the experiential, and the experimental to question conformity, commodification, and convention. Within our current reality of neoliberal agendas, racial intolerance, threats to democracy, and climate crisis, sound artists overtly or indirectly critique systemic structures and values through listening strategies, experimental projects, decolonial practices, and performative actions. They refuse the homogenizing pressures of the culture industry through practices that keep difference and heterogeneity active. The methods, strategies, rhythms, tonalities, and temporalities of sound production support social, spatial, political, ethical, and intersubjective engagement. The interconnectivity of sound art and social change affirms the relationality of sound (art) and the world.

Our reality of declining biodiversity, climate crisis, social inequality, pandemic, international conglomerates, and market-driven rhetoric is amplified by the absence of a cohesive alternate social vision. To complicate matters further, we are embedded in systemic structures from which we may benefit. How we, as artists or non-artists,

maintain agency is a question. Kim's signing of the American National Anthem in American Sign Language at the 2020 Super Bowl was broadcast to millions of viewers, expanding her audience to the world of sports fans and potentially to thousands of deaf sports fans. Her performance signifies a shift in awareness toward diversity, able-bodiedness and accessibility, and the role of sound art in expanding social discourse.

Voegelin argues that sound is not an essentialist position devoid of the visible world; rather, sound presents a possible portal to the world that provides other ways to hear the world. The invisible, audible, and inaudible dimensions of sound as sonic possibles offer new ways to think about the world, our relations to each other, and the future in social, political, and ethical terms. Sound pluralizes experience. It expands the visual by revealing the politics of the invisible and challenges exclusion. The intersection of Voegelin's sonic possibles and Braidotti's interconnectivity underlines difference, diversity, empathy, and transformation as becoming. Subjective and intersubjective engagement with sound art and listening is intensified by multiple bodies sounding their differences and their diversity within our shared social timespace. The potential for transformation is diffused through the multiple soundings of difference and the differences of multiplicities. The multiple and differentiated soundings endorse democratic principles of debate and dissent including the critique of structures that silence difference and the other. By sounding difference, sound art affirms heterogeneity. Listening connects the listener to the world. Listening to sound (art) as heterogeneity and difference reveals the scope and diversity of others, of cultural difference, and of nonhuman beings and forces through their soundings. We are intertwined, entangled, and interconnected. The fluctuating frequencies of sound (art) support nonfixity, instability, and shifting relations. The mutability and transformative capacity of sound enable change and becoming. The feminine sonic applies this way of thinking through its attention to process, and embodied experience rather than to end goals. The subject who performs on Hlady's sound stage or navigates through the multiple soundings of Jacques' kinetic sound field or listens in a sound walk is becoming-sonic. The experience of becoming sonic is transformative; it shifts how the subject engages with the sound artwork or with others. This alters our perception. Becoming-sonic transforms the listener(s) experientially and viscerally. How might becoming-sonic shift cognition?

The complexity of social and relational aspects of sound and interconnectivity have potential for cognitive transformation. Drobnick's listening awry listens with askance. For me, listening awry intersects with Stein's method of bending language and meaning; the spatial reorientation and transformation of her objects into other substances is sonic in its sensibility. The status of Stein's objects is fluid: their identity is becoming or becoming other. It is in transition. The materiality of sound and its diffusion in space resonates with mutability of Stein's objects. Listening to sonic materiality and feminist materiality has potential to transform listening bodies and thinking about systemic structures. Experience intertwines with thinking. Stein's transformations present an imaginary world that shifts how I think about the given and understand the possibility of change. Sound extends Stein's transformation of language as meaning to the sonic real through embodied experience, the intersection of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, sonic materiality and flux, the relationality of sound and space, and listening as social action. This is the potential for transformation in real terms. Becoming-sonic is not static, nor is it imaginary. It is transitional, transformative, and part of social change. Extending the potential for sonic transformation to social structures is a lateral step. To think about becoming-sonic is to think about the potential for change.

Systemic structures and ideologies of patriarchal thought are relatively easy to critique. More challenging is avoiding the replication of the extractive mentalities of capitalism as practised by neoliberal policies. How and what individual and social actions might transform the pastpresent into the presentfuture? What are the sounds and silences of these sonic actions, events, and occurrences? In listening to the soundings of others, how might we reconsider our relations with each other and to the world? At an ethical level, listening has capacity for empathy and transformation—becoming-other, becoming-multiple, and becoming-natureculture—as the interconnectivity of subjectivities and sounding energies in the world. Listening to the soundings of others has potential for becoming-sonic. The question is how becoming-sonic might contribute to social transformation? What values are sustainable for our collective future? What is our responsibility? What are the consequences of not listening? The listening practices of Westerkamp's acoustic ecology brings conscious attention to living forces in the world while sounding them as a mode of navigation. The interconnectivity of sonic materiality,

ecology, and indigenous knowledge proposes a new sonic possible for listening and hearing timespace as intergenerational rather than as linear time or discrete events.

In listening to social, relational, temporal, ethical, and colonial issues in sounding practices, questions of who else has been silenced become audible. Unmuting silence shifts discourse about social bodies to the shared space of our commons. Whose and what sounds are audible? Whose and what sounds are inaudible? What and whose silenced sounds need to be unsilenced? Listening through the consciousness of Robinson's decolonial listening practices links positionality to reconciliation. In listening with positionality to the intergenerational thinking of Indigenous knowledge, the feminine sonic hears the temporality of the ancestral tradition, the relationality with other living beings, and settler privileges. Sounding these differences offers a starting point for becoming our collective future-or our becoming-collective future. Decolonial practices of listening necessitate settler responsibility and actions for reconciliation. The feminine sonic links notions of the human and nonhuman to Braidotti's becoming-multiple as interconnectivity to ask: how sound art might listen to positionality as intergenerational knowledge? how might decolonial listening practices interconnect with becoming-multiple and the feminine sonic? and what might the impact of intergenerational thinking on sound art practice be?

Listening practices tend to focus on human and nonhuman sounding bodies, the changing soundscape, and acoustic ecology. The impact of sound production technology—specifically electronic and digital equipment—on the environment as detritus and on natural resources as mining is not adequately addressed. The electronic debris of sound production technology has ecological ramifications for future generations. As sound artists, we are complicit in environmental destruction. The extent to which sound artists contribute to ecological degradation is minor in comparison to environmental destruction by mining industries, however ethical and ecological questions connect the extractive practices of settlers to intergenerational thinking. How can an ecological awareness be integrated into sound art practice as a responsibility? How might we listen to and hear the after-life of technology?

Artists—including me—are not exempt. The production of sound installation and performance de-emphasize the commodity through their embrace of impermanence, the provisional relations of material elements, and liveness. Despite this intention, my transient, sonic configurations require electronic and digital audio technologies that will eventually end up in a landfill site as the aftermath of production. How we as artists incorporate responsibility into our sound art practice is an ethical question. Jacques' resuscitation of discarded technology and found materials in her sonic-kinetic projects extends their use value and delays their addition to the growing pile of electronic waste.

Recurring in this research is the question of relationality: how sound art and listening connect us to each other and to the world. Featured sound artworks employ various methods for engagement: the imagined sounds of Kim's notational drawings, the strictures of Burgoyne's buzzers, or the site-specific, decolonial project of moore's proposed river performance. These projects involve the relations of listening bodies to a context. Lomax's conjugation expands the question of relationality of (sonic) interactions to non-human agents (birds) and materials (pine cones). The conjugation offers a method for experimental and relational art practices as the totality of generative processes, context, and others in the world, without control of the process or results. Whether the absence of control affects how the listener hears sound is a question. Sonic outcomes unfold in a process of becoming and transformation. Roughly equivalent in sound art and music are experimental techniques, chance processes, and improvisation; in acoustic ecology, it is the sound walk. The conjugation expands the frame of reference beyond art to the real. For the feminine sonic, the conjugation endorses working *with* rather than imposing *on*. The potential of the conjugation extends to our relations with others and to cultural difference as an inclusive position with responsibility. The transformative potential and becoming of the conjugation challenge systemic structures of causality and rationality. Outcomes exceed choreography: non-control affirms interconnectivity as well as the autonomy of discrete components.

This research has deepened my understanding of the complexity of social and relational aspects of sound and sound art as interconnectivity with real potential for transformation. The intertwining of embodied experience, the senses, sonic materiality, and unsilencing

critiques structures that silence or deny difference. Listening to diverse soundings as subjective, intersubjective, and collective relations includes our responsibilities to the world and to others. Sonic possibles, interconnectivity, and the conjugation affirm the relations of sound and space, sounding bodies, our precarity, and social transformation. Listening strategies and sonic fluctuation have potential for transformation, empathy toward the other, and the mutability of our relations. How well we listen to others enables or impedes transformation. Listening to sound art as the interconnectivity of social actions and interactions connects the present to the future with an ear to presentfuture sonic possibles.

Interstice Six: Artwork

beginning again, 2020.

Artlab Digital Features, Visual Art Department, Western University

In “Composition as Explanation,” Gertrude Stein writes about the notion of time as a continuous present that uses “more and more of everything, beginning and beginning and beginning.”³⁶⁶ For her, the present is a repetition of the past: the sense of difference lies with the perceiver. Time is the now; it is not a linear continuum of the past-present-future. *beginning again* is a repetitive performative action of volleying a balloon into space. The action stays with the here-and-now-of-what-is through a structured and repetitive task. Small sounds—dull thuds of gloved hands against the balloon’s skin and footsteps of the performer—accompany the actions. In the video, the volley, sound, moving body, and balloon recur again, again, and again. The performer initiates the action but does not direct the trajectory or speed of the balloon’s spatial motion. The balloon’s course of motion is affected its own resistance and air circulation from the ventilation system in the gallery space. As a latex sack filled with air, the balloon references the skin, the body, and vulnerability. The performer responds to the materiality of the object within the space and conditions of and for performance. Within Covid, the notion of the continuous present is heightened. Keeping the balloon airborne is the continuous present of repetition, persistence, and beginning again.

³⁶⁶ Gertrude Stein, “Composition as Explanation” (Poetry Foundation, Chicago)
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69481/composition-as-explanation>.



Figure 16. Video still of performance action. *beginning again*, 2020. Artlab Digital Features (2020), Visual Art Department, Western University. Image credit: Ruth Skinner.



Figure 17. Video still of performance action. *beginning again*, 2020. Image credit: Ruth Skinner.

Link 6. Time-based Media: ArtLab Digital Features and Website. *beginning again*, 2020.

ArtLab Digital Features: <https://www.uwo.ca/visarts/artlab/digital/index.html#beginning>.

Web: <https://www.ellenmoffat.ca/category/performance/>.

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Appendix 1: Exhibitions and Performances

Exhibitions

- 2021: *Becoming Again, Beginning Undone*, Thesis Exhibition, McIntosh Gallery, London, ON.
- 2021: *Written on the Earth*, Group Exhibition with Hannah Claus, Patrick Mahon, Joel Ong, Eeva Siivonen, Matt Truman, McIntosh Gallery, London ON. Curated by Helen Gregory. Exhibition catalogue, upcoming.
- 2019: *Sounding Bodies / Body Soundings*, Media Space, PAVED Arts, Saskatoon, SK, curated by David Lariviere. Publication upcoming.
- 2018: *A Little Piece of String*, Remai Modern, Saskatoon, curated by Troy Gronsdahl, (Nov 2, 2018 to Jan 6, 2019).
- 2018: *Transformable V*, curated by Eric Mattson, Latitude '53 Edmonton, AB.
- 2017-2020: *VibraFusionLab: Bridging Practices in Accessibility, Art and Communication*. Tour of SW Ontario: Chatham (Thames Art Gallery); Toronto (VTape); London; Hamilton (Centre 3); Guelph Civic Museum. On-line Publication.

Performances

- 2020: *beginning again*, performative action. Collaboration with Ruth Skinner, Artlab, Visual Art Department, Western University.
- Sounding Accessibility*, Collaborative Performance with Marla Hlady and Gordon Monahan, Civic Museum, Guelph.
- 2019: *Sounding Bodies / Body Soundings*, collaboration with Helen Pridmore. Sounds Like Audio Festival: Real Sound, Saskatoon, SK.
- 2018: *A Little Piece of String*, collaboration with Jeff Morton, Remai Modern, Saskatoon, SK.
- 2018: *Texturings*, collaboration of sound and moving image performance with Eeva Siivonen, Forest City Gallery, London, ON.

Appendix 2: Publications and Reviews

Publications

Upcoming:

Written on the Earth. Edited by Helen Gregory. London, McIntosh Gallery, Catalogue of an exhibition at the McIntosh Gallery. Helen Gregory, Paige Hirshey, Lindsay Dawn Dobbin, Patrick Mahon, and Greg Kopp.

“Sounding Bodies | Body Soundings,” Steve Bates. In *PAVED meant*, Vol 3, (2017-2-18). Edited by David LaRiviere, PAVED Arts, Saskatoon, SK.

2020: CARFAC Newsletter: “Catching Up with Ellen Moffat.” In Conversation with Jeff Morton, Nov/Dec 2020.

2018: “A Little Piece of String,” Ellen Moffat in Conversation with Troy Gronsdahl, Dec 11, 2018. Remail Modern, Saskatoon, SK.

<https://remaimodern.org/field/read/a-little-piece-of-string-ellen-moffat-in-conversation-with-troy-gronsdahl>.

Reviews

2020: “Expanding the Artistic Experience,” David Bobier, Vibra Fusion Lab, Bridging Practices in Accessibility, Art, and Communication.

<https://vflvibrations.com/text/>.

2018: “Les Transformables (V),” Ian Crutchley, *Music Works*, Concerts and Events.

<https://www.musicworks.ca/reviews/concerts-and-events/les-transformables-v>.

Appendix 3: Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Ellen Moffat
Post-secondary Education and Degrees:	<p>University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada Ph.D in Art and Visual Culture</p> <p>University of Regina Regina, Saskatchewan Canada Master of Fine Arts (1995)</p> <p>Concordia University Montreal, Quebec, Canada Bachelor of Fine Arts (1992).</p> <p>University of Toronto Toronto, Ontario, Canada Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology (1977)</p>
Honours and Awards:	Social Science and Humanities Research Council (2018-2021)
Related Work Experience	<p>Sessional Instructor University of Western Ontario Department of Visual Arts (2020)</p> <p>Teaching Assistant University of Western Ontario Department of Visual Arts</p>

Professional Affiliate
Graduate Research & Studies Department
University of Saskatchewan (2011-2017)

Collaborator

Tracing the City: Interventions of Arts in Public Spaces
SSHRC Research-Creation Grant in Fine Art: Solomon Nagler,
Kim Morgan, and Martha Radice (2011-2014)