

AUTUMN CHACON
JENEEN FREI NJOOTLI
MELISSA GENERAL
SUZANNE MORRISSETTE

CURATED BY
LISA MYERS
22 OCT TO 10 DEC
2016

OPENING RECEP 21 OCT 5 PM TO 8 PM

PTION

PERFORMANCE
JENEEN FREI NJOOTLI
6:30 PM

TRINITY SQUARE VIDEO
401 RICHMOND WEST
#121













Human Place in Nature (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995). 69-90. , See William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness" in Uncommon Ground Rethinking the 22 See Marcia Crosby, "Mations in Urban Landscapes," in Nations in Urban Landscapes (Vancouver: Cantemporary Art Gallery, 1997), 12. amended the act to align with gender equity under Canada's Charter of Rights

colonial laws and legislation. For example, section 12 (1)(b) of the Indian Act eradicated Indian status of any women who married a non-Indian man, until 1985 when Bill C-31 There are many examples of how First Nations women are oppressed and silenced by ²⁰ See Deborah Doxtator. "Godi'Nigoha': The Women's Mind and Seeing Through the geomagnetic and acoustical energies.

19 See Deborah Doxtator. "Godi'Nigoha': The Women's Mind and Seeing Through the Land" in Godi'Nigoha': The Women's Mind (Brantford. Ontario: Woodland Cultural Centre:

energies in her listening and music, including electrical, magnetic, electromagnetic, time. She also developed the theory of a sonosphere, which takes into consideration with two other musicians in a two million gallon cistern with a 45-second reverberation and composer Pauline Oliveros first coined the phrase "deep listening" while improvising (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University Of California Press, 2013). 174-186. Musician See Douglas Khan. Earth sound earth signal: Energies and earth magnitude in the arts ators called the New BC Indian Art and Welfare Society Collective. This work was made for Bush Gallery established by a collective of Indigenous artists and

Hogue elaborates on the term "bush theory" used by Frei Njootli to describe the knowledge for survival in one's ancestral territory. I think this also transfers to survival in ы See Tarah Hogue. "pulling through." in Slip the Snare (Belkin Gallery: UBC. 2016). 15. Le Jeneen Frei Njootli, "Sovereignty's Resonance: Singing, Sounding, Listening, Playing," analysis useful in thinking about transmission (speaking) and listening (reception). This article also thinks about the generative function of voice in activist, community and voice, speaking and listening integral to creating relational space. I tound Kanngleser's Progress in Human Geography 36, no. 3 (2011), 344. Kanngieser reviews literature on LA See Anja Kanngieser, "A sonic geography of voice: Towards an affective politics,"

nveyed during a conversation with Autumn Chacon in Vancouver. July 21, 2016.

proadcasts and telecommunications in Canada.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regulates Online interview with Autumn Chacon by Maren Tarro. "How to Get a Piece of the FM Dial" from the Prometheus Radio Project. http://www.prometheusradio.org/how-get-Radio in Canada (Vancouver: New Star Books, 2010). 71. Śee Andrea Langlois. Ron Sakolsky and Marian van der Zon. Islands of Resistance. Pirate Barcelona, New York: Arts Santa Mònica, 2016), 12. of Invisible Fields" in Invisible Fields: Geography of Radio Waves, ed. Jose Luis de Vicente 9 See Honor Harger and José Luis de Vicente, "There, but Invisible: Exploring the Contours Monague of Chimnissing. Beausoleil First Nation, who helped me determine the title for

Chi miigwech for a conversation with Anishinaabemowin speaker and teacher B. Jeff found Hill's reflection on speaking through the megaphone helpful to understand the See Richard Hill. "Speaking into Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan:Speaking to Their Mother" in No Visible Horizon. ed. Peta Rake (Banff. Walter Phillips Gallery. 2016). 21-27. See Marjorie Beaucage. "Speaking to Their Mother" at 13:26 on Vimeo: https://vimeo.

Video notes from Vtape, http://www.vtape.org/video?vi=3131. e politics and voices were already strong. No doubt the Oka crisis compelled strong voices among Indigenous artists but I argue that f "noondwaa" in this specific song also conveys the idea of listening. Although there are other words in Anishinaabemowin that mean listen, my understanding speaking of Anishinaabemowin to emphasize that language is integral to movements of

anguages. "wnoondwaamin" addresses the importance of the utterance and lere I use sound, song and voice together, though I realize that language has specific of quiet. Authors on silence and listening include John Cage and Pauline Oliveros.

upcoming exhibition tour. development of this exhibition at Trinity Square Video and the Thank-you and miigwech to John G. Hampton for his work in the

how sound connects different times and spaces. transferring knowledge through generations, recalling build on the value of transmission and reception in seems to be nothing to hear. These works realize and is about listening and being heard, even when there sound carries in and beyond the audible. This exhibition chorus and a conversation about the resonances that and memories. Together these sound works create a energies to access community connections, knowledge maker. These artists build up the capacity of sound bnuos bna gnibnuos lanigina of the original sounding and sound back, distorts, phases and delays, straying from any the electromagnetic field. Sound reverberates, feeds transmission and reception of sound waves in occupying wnoondwaamin | we hear them calls for the

place and our reaction to that place. adding or removing sound, which alters the sense of a a network of relations. I propose that this is similar to influence we have moving through places and altering imagery. In this way, Morrissette's work highlights the from the scene as their body becomes the sound and image and so on. The participant is no longer distinct perception changes their reaction, which changes the I think of this as a feedback loop of perception. Their the participant's perception of the sound and image. respectively. Creating these changes in the scene alters the water scene increases and decreases the volume sway in the wind. Movement toward and away from up of reeds increases the speed of the scene as they transmission) creates. Moving in front of the closeresponds to any changes their movement (input or control the composition of the artwork and the viewer of the audio and image. Participants influence and scenes, their movement changes the speed or volume As audiences move in front of the videos of nature as settlements, developments, reserves or park land. maps of cities or other kinds of land parceling such space is marked by a grid on the floor, recalling compositions authored by the participant. A delineated sound and image through their bodily movements as imagery (transmit). Morrissette considers the resulting as they view (receive) and manipulate sound and

move to establish nature reserves and wilderness having their use of lands deemed illegal, and the and injustice of the removal of Indigenous people, services in the United States. He reveals the paradox twentieth century development of the national park the construction of wilderness, including the early constructs. Geographer William Cronon discusses how concepts of nature and wilderness are Western Choosing an urban location to shoot nature highlights

makes participants the receiver and transmitter

turn in Morrissette's work as the interactive element

Transmission and reception takes a different

studies of nineteenth and twentieth century painters. the grand narratives of Canada through the landscape convey a sense of untouched nature so often revered in in Toronto, east of the downtown waterfront, they both moving water. Although both are shot at the Leslie Spit crystalline ice surface as accompanied by the sound of off the ripples on the water and shimmering off the partially frozen bay on a sunny day, light reflecting the sound of wind. The other video is a long shot of a One video depicts a close up of cool grey reeds with an urban environment shrouded in the tenets of nature. Morrissette's artwork presents two perspectives of

and land can intertwine. and images, to reveal how even subtle human activity I look to language to provide some answers to these — sounds of landscapes, seemingly microcosmic sound installation focuses on the subtle and often unnoticed to detect distance and movement. This interactive with Kinect hardware, which uses small sensors the same (2016) was made using MAX MSP software scores. 25 A new work for this exhibition called one and different ways to harvest sound in creating audio (2014). She continued this thread of inquiry by finding the basis for her video, score for the bottom of a lake underwater contact microphones, which she used as sound from the bottom of Lake Superior with DIY from a video work where Morrissette harvested the Her interactive installation for this exhibition emerged in or framing the image to exclude the urban context. urban wilderness scenes, yet disguises them by zooming Suzanne Morrissette uses sound and imagery from

perceptions of Indigenous cultural identifies. urban experiences and histories while interrupting bevil to seitixelqmos ent sthailight ydsos Cross fradition."22 Cross fradition of the complexities of the complexity of its cultural corollaries of authenticity, origins and contemporary aboriginal land dispute politics and the geo-political and economic boundaries drawn by argues, "aboriginal nationhood ... extends beyond looking at the urban as Indigenous space. She spaces. Crosby's approach provides a means of from the demarcated spaces of reserves into urban and educator Marcia Crosby expands the discussion Landscapes,z" Tsimshian-Haida art historian, curator In her exhibition and essay "Nations in Urban

of tension between matriarchal societies in the context this oppression is patriarchal hegemony, another source intellectual constructs on the landscape."20 Implicit in another culture's mind has super-imposed its own uneasy question of how to think about a world where "Iroquoian (Rotinonhsyonni) Women grapple with the a Haudenosaunee matriarchal and feminist lens: connection in a colonial context through what I call Mohawk woman maintaining a sense of cultural Doxtator explains the ever-present dilemma for a the Kanyen'kéha language and the sound of water. possibilities of transmission and reception in using and water. In this way, General creates multiple

and creation stories, which are all related to land Haudenosaunee cosmology, such as clan matriarchs and access personal and social histories based on performance suggest a sense of needing to retain The urgency of General's gathering actions in her or land."19

''o'tara', which can translate to both clan and clay way to identify oneself in relation to community—is notes that the Kanyen'kéha word for "clan"—another connection between land and people. For instance, she describes that the Kanyen'kéha language infers a Haudenosaunee curator and scholar Deborah Doxtator Kanyen keha (Mohawk) words with no translation. questions. The titles of General's artworks are often

reinforcing Indigenous presence in terms of land use river water. How does this work signify more than knowledge is passed on through her mother and the documents of her connection to place and how performance and the resulting objects become continues to change. I am interested in how General's Now contained and sealed, the water's appearance The mason jars are from General's mother.

testimony for this work. dedicated to this process, sound is the remaining becomes an endurance performance. Compelled and the water resists her movements, her walk increasingly With every step on the rocky bottom of the river, where Finding her footing, she walks out of the camera frame. by precariously balancing all the jars in her arms. jars are filled and capped. General ends this collecting up another jar, she repeats these actions until multiple with water and makes her way back to shore. Picking bottom. Once in the middle of the river she fills the jar care, she manoeuvres over the rocky shore and river up a large glass far and walking into the water. With a pair of moccasins before leaning down and picking the scene. She purposefully braids her hair and puts on shoreline, bringing a visual symmetry and balance to of overcast sky, green treetops and the greyish rocky and accentuating the horizon are the horizontal bands back to the camera, facing the flowing Grand River, video opens with General entering the frame with her submersion that accompanies the video projection. The

This aquatic composition creates a sensation of calls for deep listening and time spent with the work.¹ perceptibility, subtle sounds emerge from the calm that underwater environment. Testing the limits of auditory movement and changes in gravity encompass an sharp high-end frequencies. Dulled, slowed, resisted swishing. Water tempers sound waves, rounding off which you hear intermittent washes of sustained body plunging into the water fades to stillness after science fiction space travel. The static sound of her of the bath have a sonic quality that is evocative of merge with bodily absorption. The hydro-recordings

in bath water, emphasizing how land and water baths involve the infusion of specific plant matter to the underwater sound of medicine baths. These recordings of the river in her previous work and shifts installation Kehyá:ra's (2016) departs from underwater For this exhibition, the soundtrack for her new

present sound of the Grand River in the background. at Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario, has the everexperiences and memories from her home community conversations with General she explained that the of a deep study of her connection to place. During running rivers, General's water recordings are part to their home communities. From medicine baths to materials and thus the sounds produced are connected antlers and General looks to bodies of water, where the and sustenance that caribou have provided to her home — to access sounds from materials. Frei Njootli looks to performance for video involves labour and endurance Similar to Frei Mjootli's work, Melissa General's

manipulation and sound performance, which also act as demonstrating her innovative approach to audio pedals and adjusting the volume of an amplifier, a respirator, using power tools, clicking on effects During her performances, she can be found wearing where the bush is a considered part of the audience. for an ongoing collective project called Bush Gallery foretells someone's supper. This artwork was made feathers indexes subsistence, knowledge and possibly grassy area.¹⁷ Plucked from a duck, this trace of for sarah (2015) depicts a pile of feathers on a brought this here for you from home: performance currently resides. For example, her photographic work well as in urban centres like Vancouver, where she relate to her skills and capabilities on the land, as The remnants and traces of her performances

¹⁶ Something she calls bush theory. her knowledge of how to live and thrive in a place, Njootli's work with materials such as antlers shows is a relative and provider for the Gwich'in people. Frei the antler represents a chain of relations. The caribou grinder touching its surface. Not merely a material, animal, and a dissonance resounds from the angle in Northeastern Alaska. Antlers defend and guard the across colonial borders and to their calving grounds reverberations of caribou moving through the Yukon, antenna emitting sounds, the antlers produce The antlers function as transmitters. Like an

calling for earplugs and dust masks to be handed out to of her performances demand preparation and caution, and vibrate through our bodies. The immersive quality effects and bodily responses, as low frequencies move Her use of a sub-woofer speaker enhances audio wave settles on the black surface of the performance floor. are vulnerable, as all matter is, to gravity. The powder almost as a visualization of the sound waves, yet they the gallery. White dust and antler velvet float in the air

listener's ears, the walls, the ceiling and the floor of an amplitier speaker travelling simultaneously into a ettects pedals, these altered sounds resonate trom pick up sounds and vibrations. Flowing through to the antler's surface where contact microphones in Gwich'in and English. She applies an angle grinder addresses the antler with her voice, speaking words become the tools and props of the performance. She angle grinder, media player, effects pedal and cables of photo paper mounted on plywood. An amplifier, The performance takes place on a large backdrop tools, physical labour, language, song and sounds. an ear to an installation of caribou antlers, power Frei Njootli's performance Herd (2016) turns

community of Old Crow, Yukon. for instance, may reveal the connection, knowledge need to be one?"¹⁵ The sounding of a caribou antler the sounder and who/what is the receiver? Does there places doing the sounding, questioning "who/what is voice being the sounder to belongings, objects and However, Frei Njootli's analysis shifts from the human performance practice, poses similar questions. Njootli's writing, in conjunction with her audio besides humans, as receiving sound. Jeneen Frei Earlier in this essay I posed the idea of entities,

others are silenced. social. In any situation, certain people are heard and finding voice creates a presence, be it political and/or debate, protest and/or support, and more. Gaining or of voice and sound to create spaces of community. utterances compel."14 Her analysis considers the power that, "listeners actively contribute to the spaces that with the sonic power of the human voice. She explains relationships. Geographer Anja Kannigieser contends sound fails to communicate, to create change or build no landing place. The unreceived intention of words or waves flowing over and through a material world with Transmission without reception leaves us with sound atrocities are they heard by the state and the media. are amplified to the level of collective tragedies and spectre of colonization. Only when individual voices the lives of Indigenous people today exist under the example. Whether based in cities or rural communities, heard as gunshots across the prairies, is one recent Indigenous people. The murder of Colten Boushie, residential schooling, and racialized violence against ongoing interpersonal and structural repercussions of against Indigenous women, the need to address the appeals to the police—for decades—about violence society and authorities of the state in their vociferous America have largely been unheard by mainstream Indigenous people in Canada and across North

for people to listen to each other.¹⁵ bring communities together and create opportunities personal experience of how radio is a tool that can with Chacon about her work, she described her

broadcasts circumvent and subvert the authoritative area. Also, almost anyone can be a DJ." 11 Such exposed to news info that is relevant in the immediate range around close-range issues. Listeners can also be is generated and more able to organize within a close "[radio] audience will be very close to where content where she currently lives, Chacon explains that the community organizing. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, of the work at Prometheus Project is its potential for for free, low-wattage radio space. An important part this work, Chacon helped non-profit groups apply Project based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With which has included working with the Prometheus is a practice of bringing communities together,

Chacon's work in non-commercial radio advocacy language and culture."10 of the electromagnetic spectrum to carry on traditions. Columbia as an expression of their "right to make use Radio at 91.1 FM on the Neskonlith Reserve in British Canada include First Mations' assertions to the right using items on hand near the gallery, which is located pirate-radio station outfitted with makeshift furniture and infrastructure of an unregulated micro-radio or

Chacon's radio artwork occupies and mobilizes used everyday, can be likened to the division of land as selling radio waves, an invisible electromagnetic energy The socio-political implications of regulating and broadcasts, Wi-Fi signals, cellular networks and more. radio spectrum can also be overloaded with radio Synonymous with densely populated cityscapes, the transmit and receive signals in Toronto's urban centre. frequencies that require fine-tuning to successfully obstructions, Chacon contends with saturated radio radio waves move through both physical and regulated to anyone within range who can tune in. Although Both signals are received in the gallery and available transmitter is installed elsewhere in the building. into the airwaves beyond the gallery walls. The second microphone, sound from the gallery is transmitted transmitters and a receiver. Using a feather as a Chacon's installation includes two radio

about the borders administered across North America.

built between nation states. In particular, I am thinking

gesture toward the tensions implicit in barriers that are

land barriers and borders imposed as governed spaces.

The sounds that come from these politicized spaces

recordings collected from divides—naturally occurring voices of mainstream media.¹² During a conversation sounds from the gallery and an audio collage of field Voice and Our Father's Ear (2016) transmits the Chacon's in-gallery installation Between our Mother's Using low wattage radio transmission, Autumn

the nuanced meanings that sound carries. performance, video and radio installations, revealing voices to the transmission and reception of sound in Melissa General and Suzanne Morissette-bring their this exhibition—Autumn Chacon, Jeneen Frei Njootli, human knowledge and memory.8 Each of the artists in these energies to access and be in conversation with occupation of sound waves in exploring the capacity of wnoondwaamin | we hear them calls for the

does not just reside or end within the human ear.

being received by the land.7 The reception of sound exhibition as we think of the voice as a transmission for thinking about and discussing the work in this the ground." Belmore's work offers a framework "our people have lived here for so long, they're in land, yet she also felt strong because, as she explained, community members started Neskonlith Secwepmec a sense of humility as her voice reverberated across the — to occupy the electromagnetic airwaves. For example, time speaking into the megaphone, Belmore described clear-cut forest through the megaphone. After her first — wood pieces into a table. Pirate radio practices in (Cree). Some played fiddle music to the land and to the stacked milk crates into a stool and turning reclaimed and listen. Elders and young people spoke nehiyawewin in the city's downtown core. This includes transforming Blockade in Saskatchewan. People gathered to speak hill overlooking the clear-cut area of the Wiggins Bay with the megaphone for three days standing atop a Oomama-Mowan (1992). The video documents Belmore As an installation, the artwork takes up the hardware Beaucage, Speaking To Their Mother: Ayumee-Aawach electronics, community television and radio activism. appears in a documentary by Métis filmmaker Marjorie strategies emerge from her experience with DIY speak through it. Most poignant of these public actions radio waves as Indigenous space. These artistic Belmore travelled across the country inviting people to voices amplified through a large megaphone speaker. speaking into a handheld microphone to have their This artwork called for people to address the land by at Kanehsata:ke, Quebec in the summer of 1990.4 to the construction of a golf course onto their land response to the Kanien'kéha:ka (Mohawk) resistance (1991, 1992, 1996, 2008, 2014), which was made in

> think deeply about the reception and purpose listening as understanding meaning, which makes me not just hearing as the awareness of sound, but also word "noondwaa." The translation of this word infers From the lyrics of one Anishinaabe song I learned the into the relational nature of voice, sound and song.² spaces by drawing in listeners as active participants travelling, the route of sound waves we hear occupy our bodies and exist silently around us.¹ Mingling and human aural register, they still flow through and over Although many frequencies resonate beyond our Sound is the energy created from vibrations.

ee-aawach Oomama: Speaking to Their Mother

and iconic artwork by artist Rebecca Belmore, Ayum-

The idea of listening brings to mind the important

of the ReMatriate Collective and sits on the board of directors for grunt gallery in Vancouver. Frei Njootli has been based in these unceded territories of the Musqueam, the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Stó:lō peoples for nearly a decade while pursuing



a BFA Degree from Emily Carr University (2012) and an MFA Degree from the University of British Columbia (2017). Frei jootli's practice concerns itself with Indigeneityengagement and productive disruptions. She has worked as a performance rtist, workshop facilitator rime prevention youth oordinator, and has exhibited in the last year at the Ottawa Art Gallery (Ottawa). Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary hotography (Toronto), allery 1313 (Toronto), ace rt (Winnipeg), and the Morris and Helen Belkin Art

Suzanne Morrissette is a Cree-Metis artist, curator and scholar from Winnipeg.

conferences organized by institutions such as the

Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in New

OCAD University (2011). and the University of Lyon

in France (2013). As an artist Morrissette has been

ncluded in national and international exhibitions

ncluding Noodagun Beacons for NAISA (2015).

Owning with the Gaze at Gallery 101 (2015), and

North of Here at Harbourfront Centre (2014).

York (2011), the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and

Manitoba. She received her BFA in 2009 from Emily Carr University of Art

+ Design and later completed her MFA at OCAD University in 2011. She is currently a PhD candidate in the department of Social and Political Thought at York University. Morrissette has been invited to present her research at

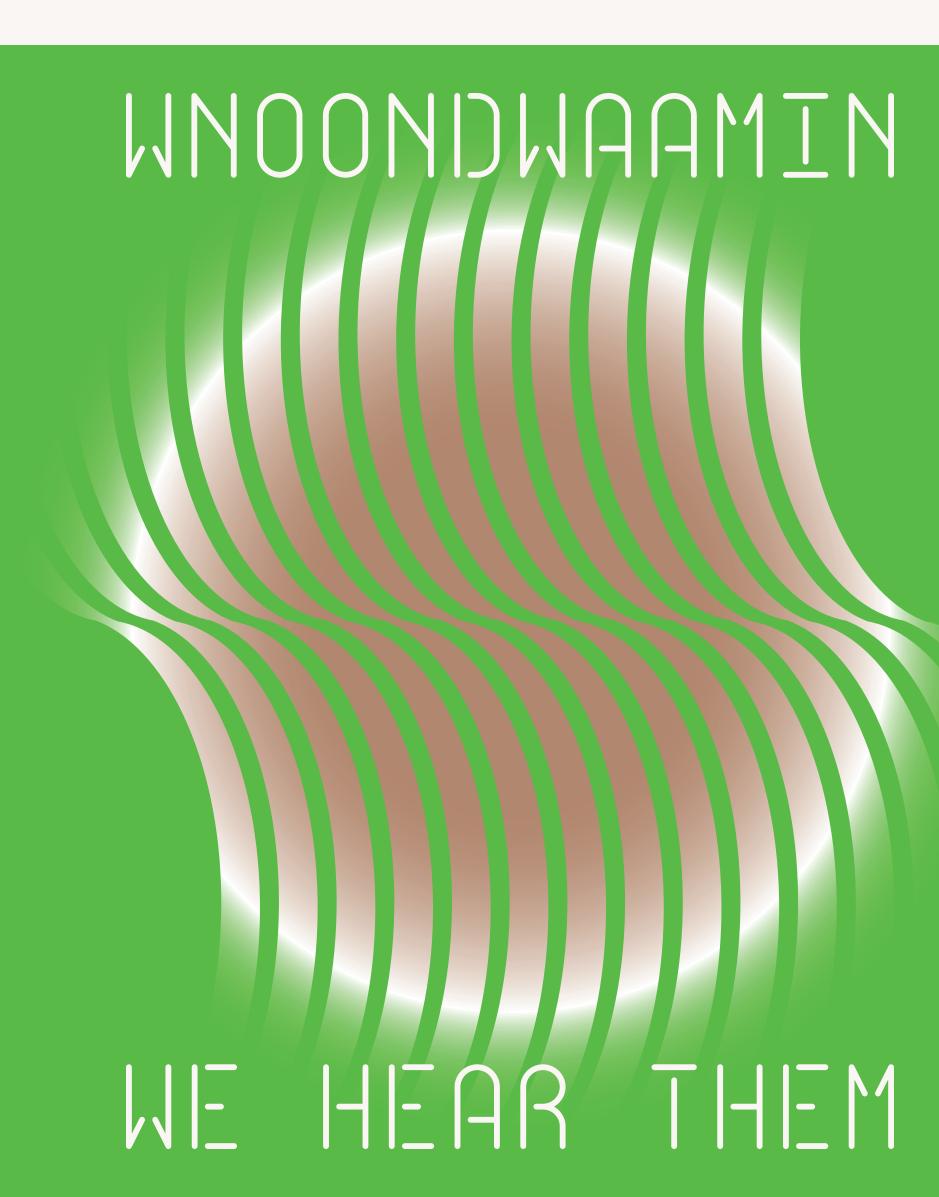
wnoondwaamin | we hear them calls for the occupation of sound waves, exploring the capacity of these energies to access knowledge and memory. Through performance, Jeneen Frei Njootli turns an ear to materials, such as caribou antlers, to sound the transmission of embedded and layered ancestral knowledge. Utilizing low wattage radio transmission, Autumn Chacon's in-gallery installation transmits and receives audio broadcasts from borders, dividing lines and barriers, overcoming physical and perceived obstructions between otherwise regulated spaces. From medicine baths to running rivers, Melissa General accesses sounds shared across time and through memory, constructing water compositions that encourage deep listening. Focusing on the subtle, often unnoticed, sounds of landscapes, Suzanne Morrissette blends microcosmic sound and images to reveal how human activity and land intertwine. Together these artworks create a chorus and a conversation about the resonances that sound carries beyond the merely audible.

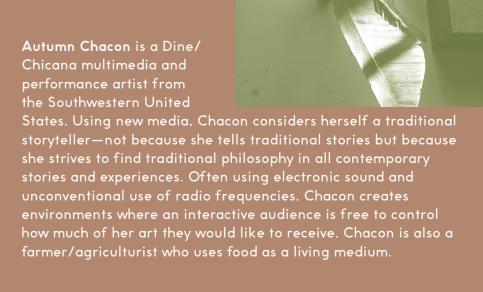
CURATOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Lisa Myers is an independent curator and artist with a keen interest in interdisciplinary collaboration. She grew up in southern Ontario and is of Anishinaabe ancestry from Shawanaga and Beausoleil First Nations. In 2011, she earned an MFA in Criticism and Curatorial Practice from OCAD University. Her current research focuses on both media art and concepts of value related to the life of materials and techniques passed on through generations. She has curated exhibitions at the MacLaren Art Centre in Barrie. The Robert Mclaughlin Gallery in Oshawa and the York Quay Centre at Harbourfront in Toronto. Her writing has been published in Senses and Society, C Magazine and FUSE Magazine. Myers works in Port Severn and Toronto, Ontario.

PROJECT MENTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Cheryl L'Hirondelle (Cree/Metis/German) is a community engaged multi- and interdisciplinary artist, and singer/songwriter originally from the land now known as Canada. Her creative practice is an investigation of the junction of a Cree worldview (nêhiyawin) in contemporary time space. Since the early '80s, L'Hirondelle has created, performed and presented work in a variety of artistic disciplines, including music, performance art. theatre, spoken word and storytelling, through redundant and new media. In the early '90s, she began a parallel career as an arts consultant/advisor, programmer, cultural strategist/activist and director/producer. L'Hirondelle's various activities have also found her working in the Canadian independent music industry, national artist-run centres, educational institutions, the Canadian prison system, First Nations bands, tribal councils and governmental funding agencies at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.







Grand River Territory. She is a graduate of the Onta College of Art and Desig

and completed an MFA degree at York University. Working in photography, installation and video, the focus of her practice has been on concepts involving memory, history, land and her Indigenous identity. Her work has been exhibited at The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Art Gallery of Peterborough, Gallery 101, Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography and has been included in the 2016 Contemporary Native Art Biennial