

Sounds of Silence Project Summary – Felicity Hauwert

This project began as nothing more than a dream I had in March 2022, propelled by the desire to create a space to share in the beauty and sounds of this land with my community who often lack the means to connect with it. The problem with this, however, is how do we hear the land when its landscapes are ridden with colonial reverberations? Reflecting on the lessons of Professor Zoe Todd and their research with the Bull Trout of what is colonially referred to as “Alberta”, I was thinking a lot about engagement with more-than-human beings and notions of consent present in settler research discourses. Institutional frameworks often shape consent around the human subject, thus reinforcing colonial hierarchies of being. Therefore, *Sounds of Silence: A critical examination of the weaponization of sound in the city*, presents an opportunity for a case study of how non-Indigenous or non-local Indigenous researchers can ethically gain consent from, and work in collaboration with the land on which they are living. I aimed to examine who has a right to silence and gentle soundscapes in the capital city, while simultaneously carrying out this work in such a way that also generates a *healing* space and ultimately methodology for marginalized and under-represented communities disproportionately impacted by the sound assaults carried out upon the city in January and February 2022.

Given the nature of this project, the “methods” employed were far from what would be considered institutionally conventional. Many of my days took shape as a sitting *with* the land; approaching each new engagement with the intention of recentering the land as subject rather than object, and furthermore, as co-researcher rather than one being researched. To attune rather than just listen I had to learn to take my time. This meant many days spent in the field not collecting footage, but rather, getting acquainted with the space to determine whether I felt welcomed to eventually record. As such, a primary method employed was my own intuition.

Speaking more broadly, it is my hope that this research will expand the language and application of consent discourse within the social sciences both here at Carleton University, and the national research ethics board (REB) at large. At the time of writing this summary, both research bodies’ current legislation regarding consent is ostensibly human centred.

With the help of further funding, it is my aim to continue developing this project to create a sonic anthology of sorts. It would be amazing to combine my video and sound-based work with my photography work for a multi-media experience. Additionally, I will continue to work with grassroots collectives that facilitate spaces for Black people to connect and live in relation with the Land on which we find ourselves.

To conclude, I wanted to include this short passage I wrote in the field in late September:

09.27.2022

The wind passes through me, but she does not cut.
She understands my wounds,
The ones running deep that need tending to.

She licks them clean with her cooling tongue.
Did you know her saliva has healing powers?