

AN INVITATION

Like any enticing invitation, this one offers some context to what you're about to get into, but leaves some details aside about what you might experience if you decide to accept. Unfolding akin to an album, *Another World That Sounds Like You* arranges the works of artists, musicians, and creative practitioners into an immersive and durational environment that engages the act of collective listening and sound-making. For the span of the project, the gallery space is transformed into a cozy living room where visitors can spend time listening together. This divergence is premised on a desire to engage the aural through audio works that open up felt and participatory forms of connection. It presents an opportunity for close listening to circumvent ocular-centrism, and channel other sensorial realms.

Above all, this project is an invitation. It is an invitation to you, dear listener, to rest the eyes and activate the ears. It is an invitation to come into the gallery, slow down and listen together to sounds, voices and compositions that channel other worlds - of nature, of songs unheard and chants misunderstood. Most of all, it is an invitation to think of listening to sounds as co-articulation. Sounds are constructed by those who listen and the spaces in which these sounds resonate and are amplified. It is an invitation to think of how the act of listening is entangled with personal and collective subjectivities, and the ways in which we come into being at the moment of listening; our emotional and bodily states, our histories, and positionalities. It is an invitation to imagine other worlds, to open up to them by listening *out* to reverberations that might soothe, confront, or jar, but that might also incite, propel and resonate beyond the physical.

The motivation for this project comes in response to a capitalist and modernist devaluation of collective listening practices, from the decline and commercialization of listening salons and live music gatherings, to hyper-individualized listening mediums such as headphones that have become prevalent in public space. Many collective sound-making practices related to social ceremony or public incantations of lament and joy across the world, such as wailing or ululating, are now frowned upon or deemed "uncivilized." Politically and artistically, marginalized voices are silenced or purposefully unheard. *Another World That Sounds Like You* attempts to re-engage the world-building potentials of sounds that generate immaterial social relations and reverberations. As bodies gather in space, whether on the streets, in homes, or in the gallery, the affects of listening become experiential, heightening our sensation of what we hear, or don't hear. The act of listening becomes political.

One curious potential of sound and music is that they can be appropriated as a subversive strategy for coding and intentional misunderstanding. During the British Mandate of Palestine, Palestinian mothers would sing encrypted songs as they walked around the exterior walls of prisons that held their incarcerated sons, brothers and husbands. The songs would contain messages meant to guide their loved ones on escape routes if they succeeded in fleeing: "North, oh love, the village is north, for the one whose door opens to the north." The lyrics were coded by interrupting words with specific letters to make them incomprehensible to the ears of soldiers

and translators. This style of song, called *Tarweedeh*, remains deeply-rooted in Palestinian cultural traditions of lyrics, music and dance to this day. Like JJJJerome Ellis' incantation of the coded songs of the Underground Railway, Maya Al Khaldi, a Palestinian musician and songwriter, includes such sonic traditions in her album, *Other World* (released 2022), which inspired this project's title.

Attention to the subtle movements of sound and listening in a durational program requires patience and slowness, the temporality of which is ruptured and unpredictable. It also asks for attention to fluencies and disfluencies invoked in the acts of sound-making and listening. In the gallery space, the works are facilitated by means of a score that guides the listener through the experience; welcoming and situating you and introducing the ideas behind each work. The score prompts the listener to explore a choreography of listening, conjuring intimacies and movements that the works elicit. The audio pieces are also accompanied by reading material; scripts, program notes and citations that enrich the listening experience. The furniture in the space has been commissioned specifically for this project. It uses both found, re-used and borrowed materials to create a spatial arrangement that is comforting and accessible to different variations of visitor experiences.

This project is anchored by two pillars in addition to the in-gallery experience: a radio show, and a program of sonic events that make themselves heard throughout the project's life. The radio project takes shape through a collaboration with CJRU 1280 AM, Toronto Metropolitan University's community radio. Each artist's audio track will be aired via a focused program that discusses each work's context followed by reflections by radio volunteers. By expanding the scope of the show to the experience of listening together-yet-apart on radio waves, the artists, contributors, and organizers of the project hope to explore the emancipatory potential of traveling sound waves across dispersed communities in Toronto.

A program of sonic events at Gallery TPW animates the project's listening experience as more than activation, constituting further ways to listen together in live and unrecorded settings. The program will take shape as two constellations. The first is a two-day program that focuses on the haptic. It starts with a sound bath, transporting the space into an audio meditation room, followed by a living room concert. The second constellation manifests as a closing festival steeped in sounds of rebellions and resistance movements. It will celebrate the sounds of protest, the sonic strategies of the unheard, and the radical sounds of joy and celebration.

By sonically mapping out forgotten histories and silenced social practices, this project invites a careful listening to sound waves that inscribe traces of hope, longing and grief. It brings together audio works and spatial forms that centre the relationship of sound to social and political movements, and to the body, and further questions how we perceive the sounds of our ecologies once recorded and shared. In that respect, this invitation is also a reminder to remain attentive to the sounds of this land we are on; its soil, its water, its human and more-than-human beings. What happens when you attune yourself to these wavelengths, remains up to you.

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