

At the outer edge of our Earth,
 cosmic dust is pulled towards the planet.
 Hissing and crackling, it bursts into colour,
 ignited by the density of a living atmosphere.

Converging with our air and tempered in the turbulence,
 a conversation is this way started, intangible
 transition of candescent matter, unfolding
 from the manifold silence
 of space.

All across the North Sea, the waves bear witness
 to the clamour unfolding at the doorway of sound,
 - 20km up in the sky.
 we hear the distant storms, the whirl of wind farms traveling
 along with waves in the lowest of frequencies,
 they oscillate upwards together to the fringes.

In the inlet of Cromarty firth on a still day,
 the surface is alight with oystercatchers, gulls,
 the winnowing snipe attuned to the soft
 sound of pebbles rolling in the tide.

There in the bay, our behemoths sit.

The monotonous hum of enormous machines
 floats as a thick, impenetrable cloud

punctuated only by the shrill of a loud speaker
 calling its orders out to men on the decks.

Submerged in the sea, these creatures sit,
 pulsing with a pattern we made but cannot match.

Its beatings, ravaging the depths with sound,
 resonate heedless through undisclosed bodies

unsettled and jettisoned from the fragile relation
 ship—

of life
 within life
 drowned cadences
 and other lives
 remain
 unheard

places for
 how long
 turned belly up
 or body down

our voices
 thus amplified
 we join,
 the choir of geologic murmurs

(our) geologic murmur
 Cromarty Firth



Country / City United Kingdom / Edinburgh
 University / School University of Edinburgh / Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture
 Academic year 2017 - 2018
 Title of the project 93.2 FM (OUR) GEOLOGIC MURMUR - Cromarty Firth, Scotland
 Authors Molly A. Gordon





PERFORMATIVE NATURE

Barcelona International Landscape Architecture Biennial

September 2018 **Barcelona**

SCHOOL PRIZE

X International Landscape Architecture Biennial

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge -DUOT - UPC
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TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project 93.2 FM (OUR) GEOLOGIC MURMUR - Cromarty Firth, Scotland
Authors Molly A. Gordon
Title of the course MLA Individual Landscape Portfolio
Academic year 2017 - 2018
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University/School University of Edinburgh/ Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

Two headlands, the Sutors guard the mouth of the firth, casting a protective shadow on the deep calm waters of Cromarty. Sheltered from the storms of the North Sea, the sea inlet holds extensive intertidal saltmarshes that are sites of rich wildlife. Co-existing alongside these ecological habitats in a volatile balance, the firth has one of the safest anchorage points in Northwestern Scotland. Oil rigs tower over the tranquil water and rolling fields; dominating the errie yet whimsical atmosphere of the firth. The presence of platforms in the inlet is dictated by the erratic fluctuation of crude oil barrel prices on the financial market. When prices slump and the profit margin tightens, big oil firms halt drilling and exploration activities, with obvious repercussions on industry dependent local economic-cultural landscape of the Firth. Acting in transcalar assemblages of power, the oil rigs perform within the expansive geo-political ecologies of hydrocarbon capitalism. At the same time they are also representing and reproducing the dynamics of these networks. As Cromarty Firth, becomes a key strategic point in the decommissioning of North sea oil, noise levels on and off-shore are expected to rise significantly. While many of these sounds may remain inaudible to human ears, the rise of infrasonic and ultrasonic sounds have severe effects on terrestrial and marine life. The aim of my interventions is to break the monotony of Cromarty's energy landscape and the narratives hydrocarbon capitalism and draw attention instead to the polyphonic negotiations of more-than-human worlds. I propose to occupy the hull of Hutton, a partially dismantled rig, with a radiostation. The floating platform would broadcast the contentious underwater soundscape of the firth, allowing non-human voices to inhabit the bandwidth. Alongside this tactical interruption, three interventions explore and make visible the political interactions of sound in the firth.

For further information

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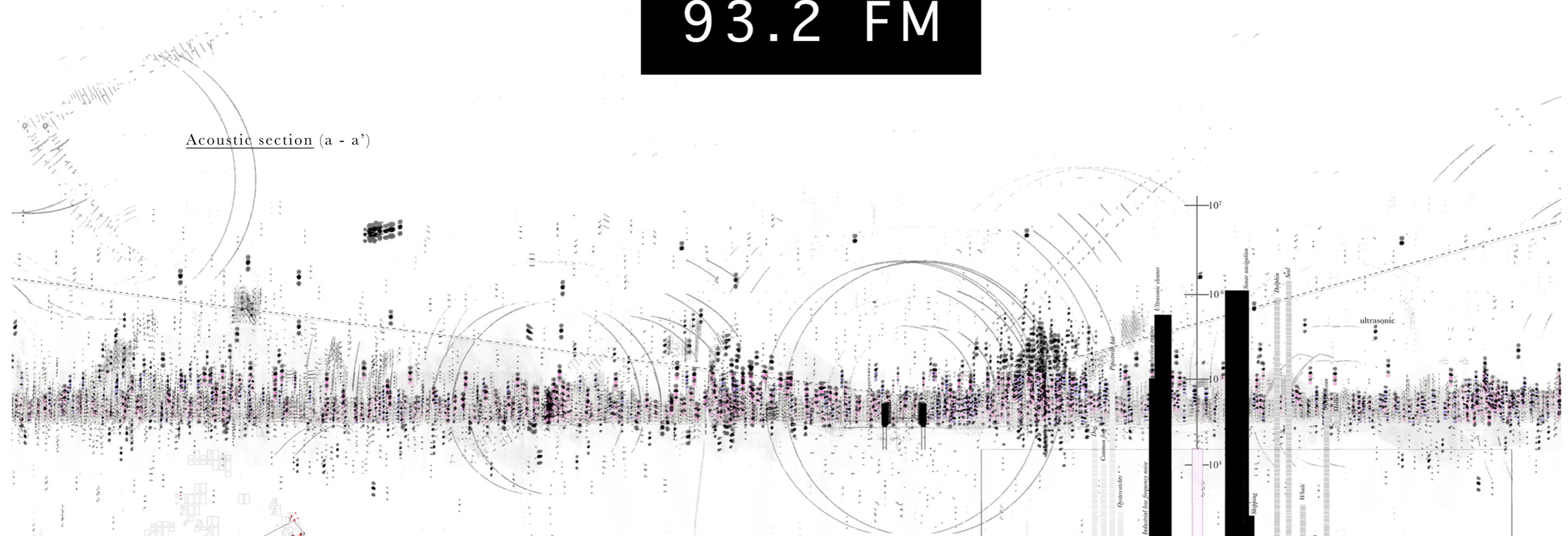
Consult the web page <http://landscape.coac.net/>

CROMARTY FIRTH

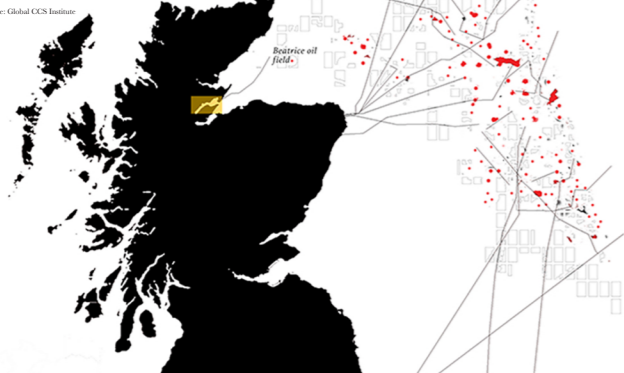
(our) geologic murmur

93.2 FM

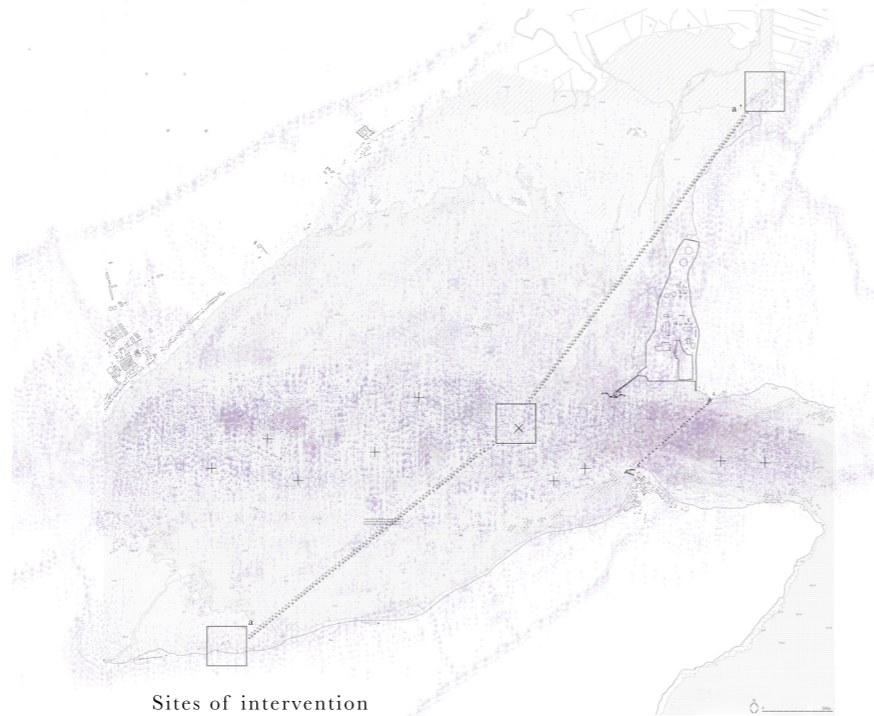
Acoustic section (a - a')



214 fields on UK continental shelf to be decommissioned
17bn pound industry (2018-2025)
1'600 wells to be plugged
840'000 tonnes of material to be disposed of
Cromarty Port authority licensed to decommission 50'000 tonnes per year
Reference: Global CCS Institute



UK North Sea Oil Infrastructure and Projections 2018 - 2030



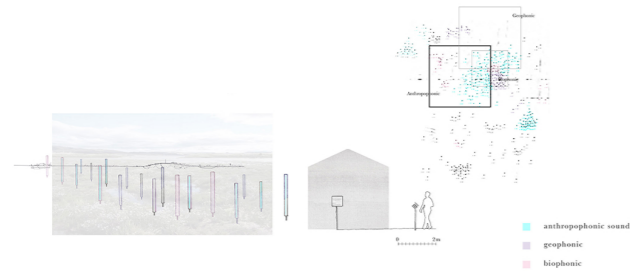
Sites of intervention

Frequency range



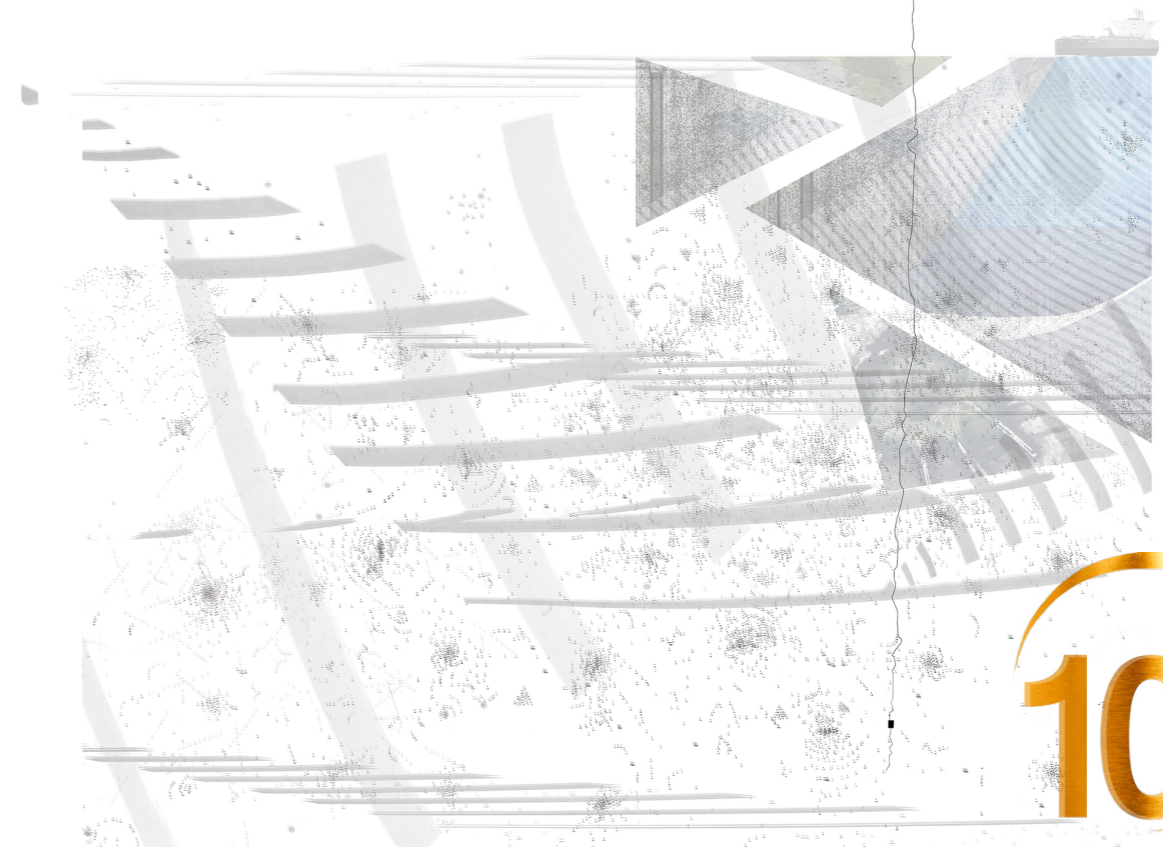
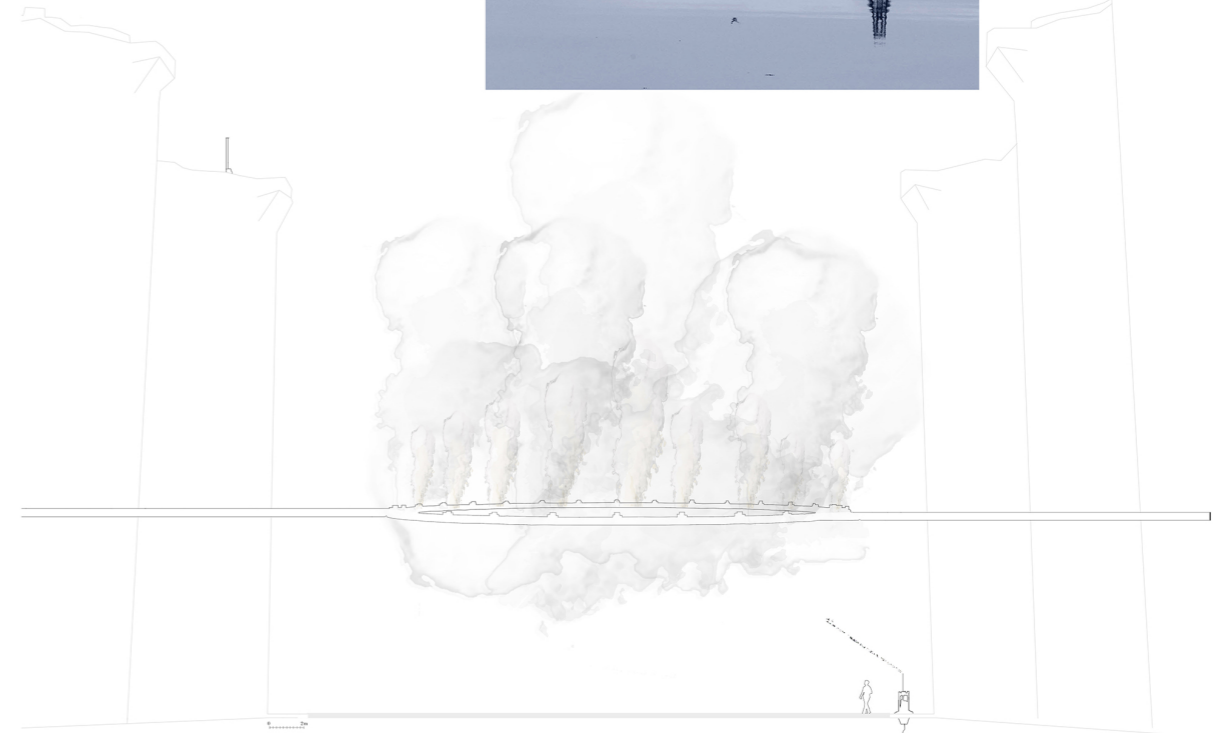
NIGG SANDS

The first installation visualizes the proportions of human, biological and geophonic sounds within the nature reserve of Nigg; reflecting the power dynamics between each group. The sculptural intervention doesn't follow the confines of the reserve but blurs its artificial boundaries.



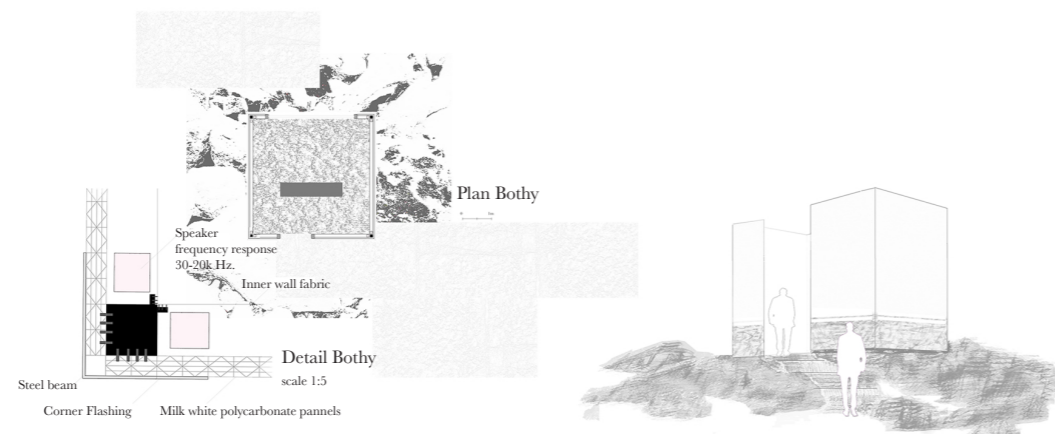
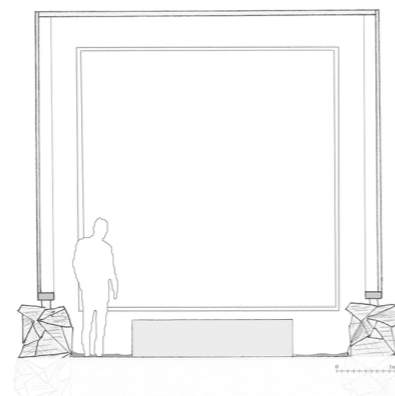
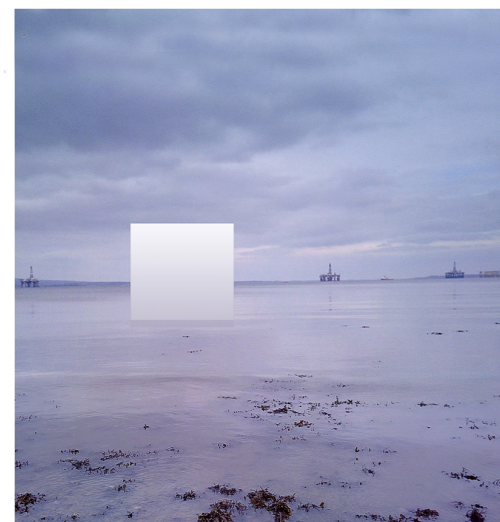
HULL OF HUTTON

On the Hull of Hutton, underwater sound pressure levels is observed. A plume of vapour is emitted when decibels approach the noise threshold, immersing the rig in a thick cloud. Broadcasting the soundscape into the atmosphere, this iconic anthropogenic machine is subverted and made to perform and communicate in the interest of non-human actants.



UDALE BAY

A bothy placed in the mudflats contains and amplified soundscape where the full range of sounds in the landscape is made audible to human ears. The still, reflective structure betrays the visitor as the atmosphere within is disruptive, a cacophony of ambient noise.





SPECULATIVE FUTURES

Sound is not just about hearing or responding, or communicating. It is about becoming aware of registers that are unfamiliar, inaccessible, and maybe even monstrous; registers that are wholly indifferent to the play of human drama. Sound is not only of the human, everything vibrates on some frequency and is touched by vibration, regardless of how imperceptible to our sensibility this might be.

(Callagher and Prio, 2016)

Cutting across temporal and spatial scales, within and through bodies, sound reflects the interactions between ecosystems, the mecosphere but also social and individual worlds of reference (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980). The interventions allow for an augmented yet intimate perception of the realities of the energy landscape and its footprint on rural environments. Interrupting the aesthetics of the Capitalo-Anthropocene, these interventions are a gesture towards approaching the commons with a sensitivity to polyphony. To invite the quiet and listen.

