

EAR | WAVE | EVENT

Issue Seven
Spring 2023
earwaveevent.org

Discussion with AM Kanngieser & Zoe Todd

BY AM KANNGIESER, ZOE TODD, & KITE

Kite:

Welcome, human, non-human. Welcome.

AM:

My name is AM Kanngieser. I am on the unceded lands of the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung people, the Kulin nations in Naarm, Melbourne, Australia. I am a white German geographer and sound artist. First-generation living here. I'm not going to start going into anything because I'm going to let Zoe introduce herself now.

Zoe:

My name is Zoe. I am hanging out here with Dominic. I'm in unceded Snaw'naw'as and Qualicum First Nations' territories. I love working with Amer. We started collaborating two years ago. We formally met in Washington, DC two years ago. Although we had been in touch before that,

Kite:

So I guess, how did you meet? Or what was the impetus for starting to work together?

Zoe:

I wrote a blog post in the fourth year of my PhD in 2014 in Scotland that went viral. And then that put me in touch with someone named Angela Last. And then that's how I got to meet Amer. And yeah, I think that was our connection because Angela and Amer had been collaborating on stuff about geology and sort of challenging the concept of the Anthropocene. And so I wouldn't be able to pinpoint when we formally started talking, but I think we united in a sense that geography and anthropology weren't accurately capturing the fullness of the issues being raised by things like the Anthropocene. And so that was how we found our way into each other's worlds.

AM:

Yeah. I have been doing work in the Pacific for the past six years with Pacific organizers and different particularly queer and trans communities there, around issues of colonization and climate change and ecocide. And one of the things that both Zoe and I were unifiably upset about was the ways that particular academics... I mean, for me in geography for Zoe and anthropology, but I think across a lot of different disciplines, like environmental humanities and things like that as well... were mobilizing places, notably in the Pacific places like the Marshall Islands with the history of nuclear testing, in this extremely abstract in what we felt quite callous and non-relational way.

And so that was one of the first things that we really began talking about was how places that had a lot more to them that we knew because we'd been there and been working with people and talking to people. And it was this fly in, fly out. Academics being like, look at this thing, look at this terrible thing. Let's write about it now. Let's write about nuclear testing and let's write about deep sea mining." Or, "Let's write about fracking," but evacuating the entire life out of it, in a sense. So yeah, I think that's what we first really started coming together around was a shared despair around that.

Zoe:

And I think for me, your work in the Pacific really resonated with observing how people outside of Alberta characterize it as a place. And if it's known to people outside of Alberta, it's usually known as Texas North for the oil sands and as a site of devastation, which it is, in a sense. The amount of resource extraction happening across the province is massive. And I think a lot of people who've made careers off of writing about Alberta, specifically non-Indigenous scholars and journalists, use it in this way that just... I feel it in my body. I just feel this... it's almost like they salivate over it as a case study.

I've come to resent the idea of Alberta as this sort of platform for people to project their own anxieties onto, without engaging what people who are from there or living there go through every day. And it became much more acute when I moved to Ontario because there's this sort of... Alberta's held out as, "Well, we're not as bad as Alberta. We're not as racist as Alberta. We're not as conservative as Alberta."

And Alberta is racist. Alberta is conservative. But it feels like that exceptionalism that some Canadians use against the US as well to diminish

problems in their own immediate space. But the Alberta I know is also full of resistance and so much more going on than these ways that it's portrayed. When I think of Alberta, I think of the places that I spent time with my family and the fish that I grew up eating and the mountains and the earth and the trees and it is such an alive place. And that's precisely why it felt so urgent to come together and interrogate what is going on with folks writing in a particularly sensationalized way about my home province. What's driving that urge for a certain kind of scholarship or journalism or even art to exploit places we know and love in that way.

AM:

I think also picking up exactly on one of the things that Zoe was saying: what we're also trying to really attend to is the non-exceptional things. People are still having birthday parties and going out and having arguments with their family members. It's this complete diminishment of the complexity and the everyday-ness of places that are also in this particular kind of process of ecocide as well. It's so obvious, but there are just so many other things that are also occurring, which completely get erased in the way that things get talked about on the anthropogenic violence.

Kite:

That is great. I have all these questions about listening, but I've been thinking and working with that text from Lou Cornum about irradiated internationals. I really loved that text because we have some uranium mining projects happening in the Black Hills and there seems to be nothing to do to stop them, though technically we're supposed to own the Black Hills and technically we've never sold it. Technically it's in a trust to us, but no. Thinking about that and the connection of the immateriality of radiation and how that connects all of these places. That is super interesting to me, but I'm supposed to be talking about listening. And I really wanted to ask about your definition of listening, and how I see that listening and attunement are in relationship to each other in your texts, but listening is a method that's not complete, but we aren't just attuned from merely listening. We'd love to hear what your definition is.

Zoe:

I mean, the listening part really flows from Amer's work because Amer is a sound artist and has spent so much time doing beautiful recordings. My mom is a broadcast journalist, and used to work for the CBC and is now a freelance broadcast journalist. So I grew up, very early on, spending time in

the old CBC Edmonton building. Very early on as a very small child, I was exposed to a world of recording and manipulation of sound, that has, I think, shaped me in ways I didn't understand. And that made coming into Amer's listening and attunement work feel very natural because I grew up with spaces where people were doing recordings of my mom. When she would do some of her pieces, she would get recordings of birds or sort of background noise to help lead into a story.

And so those things felt very second nature, but also some point in the last decade, I started thinking about the soundscapes of the city that I grew up in, which is Edmonton. And I wrote a little bit about that in 2014 without any formal training in any listening studies or sound studies. But just thinking about the sounds of the river valley, that sort of mundane reality of Edmonton, which has been called Dirt City. It's been called Dead City. Lots of different, very pejorative ways of describing it, but I've always known it as very vibrant. So the sounds of amphibians, toads and frogs in the spring, the blue jays, the magpies. It's a very vibrant place. But again, the way that the city is portrayed so frequently by outsiders is as this very dead place.

And so sound became really important to try and counter that and how I was understanding place. I think that what I've enjoyed about working with Amer, through sound as well, is that they have opened up a space to think about fish, and how fish communicate, and how fish listen, but also just recording fish sounds, and not in this extractive field recording way. It's always felt really off for me that some nature photographers and field recordists just go into a space and don't necessarily ask permission. Whereas I was always, not in a formal way, but just taught, you're in someone's home, you can't just show up, take from them, you know? And I don't think that that was ever communicated in a very explicit way. It's just how my Métis dad and my white mom brought us into spaces. So it's made working with Amer's listening and attunement work feel very second nature.

AM:

I mean, I think also it's worth mentioning Zoe that you are a musician, so.

Zoe:

When I was in my twenties and I was living in Edmonton, I walked or rode my bike everywhere because I don't know how to drive. It was also how I kept existential dread at bay. So I would walk three or four hours and I would sing to myself. I remember that I would cross the river multiple times a day

because I was living north of the river and working south of the river. I would be crossing these bridges, the High Level Bridge, singing.

It was really hard to translate those songs to guitar or keyboard because they were developed in the rhythm of walking. A lot of bad things have happened to people I love in Edmonton and to family members and they're not my stories to share.

But then if I were to look back now on that decade of riding my bike around, sometimes in the middle of the night, taking really big risks going into places that were not safe, but just going for midnight rides through the river valley, it was maybe actually an act of... I don't want to appropriate ceremony because I know that that can be a really complicated conversation, but it was an act of resonance with a place that has been very complicated for my Indigenous family, and a place that also just held a lot of trauma. So, singing was really important to that and I have some recordings of those songs, but most of them are just really ephemeral. All the cool musician artists back home were mercilessly embarrassed for me when I would try to share these songs. But when I think back on it, it wasn't that they were meant for their consumption, right? It was actually for all the other aspects of that landscape.

Kite:

That reminds me of Yoiking where, are you singing? Are you singing about the land? Are you singing to the land? Or are you singing the land? That kind of question. I don't know anything. It's not my culture, but from what I've listened to. Yeah.

I interviewed my grandfather about a year... I guess two years ago now and I asked him about listening to stones. It's a very Lakota practice. I mean, a lot of people do it, but we really love stones. I asked him, "How do you listen to them?" and I think his answer was, "You don't do it with your mind. You do with your spirit." The mind is a place that creates blockages between you and listening. And sometimes it's easy to reduce his notion there to a body centered or something that is... I don't know, there's so many body-centric terms we could use, but none of them are quite right. So I think I was looking at this methodology... method... you proposed kin study, and what is, maybe on a really fundamental level. So you go outside and then what do you do?

AM:

Oh, well I don't know. It's such a funny question, because I get asked these questions by everybody that I do interviews with. They're like, "What's your

method? What do you do?” and I mean, I don’t know. I grew up on a boat, I was born on a boat. I have ADHD and autism, and also this thing called auditory processing disorder, which means that, at least for me, every sound that I hear is at the same level of importance. I don’t have a filter of a voice, or a wave, or a bird, or the wind, it’s all at the same level of significance.

Zoe:

I also have ADHD and am neurodivergent, and I have come to understand that very late in my life. That’s another place where our work resonates because prior to having these conversations with Amer, trying to explain to someone... Well, I just go outside and I just feel, but when you’re saying you feel, and you’re neurodivergent, it doesn’t necessarily translate to someone who’s neurotypical, or has been raised in a particular worldview where you don’t hear or feel the same way, so... but I don’t want to cut you off Amer.

AM:

I’ve been with sound for my entire life and so at least for me, I just feel like I exist entirely through sound. There’s nothing else really, and I think it’s so hard to talk to people about a method that’s just how you exist, in a way. But, I had to start thinking about how to articulate that because yeah, I grew up on a boat, and then I grew up in the Pacific for a long time, and I grew up in the Bush in Australia, and was just always extremely sensitive to knowing, also, that I’m not from here, and that this place is not my place and it’s not for me, and always feeling those energetic resonances of places where that felt good or that didn’t feel like I should be there or just feeling it really strongly.

I don’t know. I’s just an energetic field, I guess. It’s hard to describe. I’ve been working as a sound artist for, I don’t know, 15, 20 years now, formally, I suppose. And when I started doing this kind of work, one of the things that was really important to me was, wherever I went, was just being there. I know you said you were in sound studies, I’m actually writing a paper about field recording and racism.¹

You’re going to have to censor this out. I never felt like it’s right to go somewhere and just be like, “I’m going to take you now.” Everything that I did, I had to wait for a while to see if it was okay to be there or not,... like Zoe was saying at the beginning so aptly. It’s like going into someone else’s home. You just don’t go in somewhere and just steal people’s stuff. It just

always felt wrong to be somewhere, and then not have an attunement with the place before doing anything. And so then Zoe and I started talking a lot about... well, what does it mean to ask permission? And one of the things that I’ve realized in recording for so long, is it’s not something that is a method where you’re like, “I’m just going to do these things and then I’m done and then I can do whatever I want.” A lot of times, I don’t feel like I have permission, and so then I have to go away. Even if it’s cost me thousands of dollars to get somewhere, if it doesn’t feel right, it’s not right. And times that I’ve gone against it, Zoe knows, I’ve had the worst things happen to me. I just had my \$2,000 recording device swamped a couple of months ago... because I thought I had... I’d asked permission one day, but then not the next day. And I was like, “Oh, it’s cool. It’s cool” and then a freak wave came and drenched me, which has never happened before. I was like, “Okay, fine” and then my pen snapped and I was like, “All right, I’m going, I’m going.”

It’s hard to explain to people what it means to feel like a place is inviting you there when, within sound studies and within field recordings, it’s not even even a concern. It’s just like, “We’ll travel here. We’ll put our microphones out, we’ll take whatever we want, and we leave.” And it’s just the absolute opposite, because for me, I have to go somewhere, lots of times. Sometimes I feel good straight away. I don’t feel like I’m going to throw up. I feel warm. I feel like I’m enveloped, or there’s a glow feeling around me and there’s a feeling of rightness and I’m like, “Okay.”

But whenever I get somewhere, I introduce myself. I say, “This is what my intentions are. This is what this is for. This is how I take care of this. This is where it’s going to live.” All of these sorts of things and other times, I feel nothing for ages. So then I just have to keep waiting and waiting and sometimes that takes weeks. Sometimes, it’s taken months where I have to keep going back and seeing, and I feel nothing, then I do nothing. Sometimes, I feel straight away like, “No, get out of here.” This is bad, and so that’s why it’s kind of hard to really articulate to people as a method, because no one wants to hear that, because it’s so uncertain and it’s so contingent and it’s so mutable.

It can change from one day to the next. I’ve been in situations where I’ve asked permission of the elders of a place and everyone’s like, “Absolutely. Go for it.” But then the place itself doesn’t want me, and so it’s not even necessarily a human consent, it’s literally a conversation with a place. I think

¹ Ed. Note: since this discussion, this paper has been published in [Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers](#).

a lot about it. Zoe and I also talked about a lot, in terms of spirits, and if they don't want you there, they don't want you there. If they want you there, you can feel it. I don't know, you can just feel it.

Zoe:

I think the key part is we're not adopting that Western post-humanist perspective where they try to argue that humans matter less. For us, because we work with Indigenous communities, we're very explicitly make sure that we have permission from human members of the community. I have had the opportunity to observe many white settler scholars operate in conservation spaces and social science spaces, and it feels like ego is so wrapped up in a lot of that work. There are people who are doing good work, and I know that communities are working with them. It's not my place to speak for those communities.

But it can feel that it's still very extractive because it's being packaged for academic consumption... I don't want the things I do to just be a line on my CV or someone else's CV. I want to know that we've done things in a way that has given consideration to the community and to the people who are impacted by things. But also the resonances of it through time...if someone else comes across it, if they are attuned, they'll feel like this was done with care. I don't really have permission to talk about her, but my aunt is a filmmaker and, I don't want to speak out of turn, but I feel she does this well in her films.

She just did an adaptation of Monkey Beach and it took her 15 years to make it, and that was because she did so much work to get permission from the community and the author. When I watched it, it was this visceral experience, and someone said, "When I watched your aunt's film, the spirit came across very powerfully."

So before I met Amer, I would have those experiences, especially when I was in the UK where I'd be in a room where people would be talking and saying all the right words as if they were doing this grounded work. I would just feel this immense rage coming through my body where I was like, "This is extractive." So, working with Amer has allowed me to unlock that. So, Amer, you have an auditory processing disorder. My way that neurodivergence works for me is there's almost no separation between me and the world. And so I just feel everything. So if I'm in a room with 300 people, I feel 300 people's everything. I haven't flown since 2018 because

being on an airplane with 200 extremely stressed out people made me so sick on my last flight, which was to go to San Jose, that at the end of the conference, I almost passed out.

If you move through the world feeling everything, then it gives you a different insight into how people are manipulating space and time and energy. And it's really hard to articulate that in spaces where Western thinkers are sort of like, "Well, those are not rational ways of explaining things." And so people have asked me, "Well, how do you?" Because Leroy Little Bear says we should ask the fish. And then people are like, "Well, how do you ask the fish?"

And for the longest time, I couldn't explain it in words until I started collaborating with Amer. Or I would try, but I wasn't coming across in a very cohesive way or coherent way. But I started to ask the fish by softening into myself when I'm near the water, and if they come, I know that I have permission to be there. I moved 10 months ago and I've seen the fish a few times, but it's not like in other places. That's how I know that I still have work to do. But when I was in Ottawa, I would go to the canal and the carp would come and swim by. I would mention this to other people, I was like, "Oh, I love all the carp" and they're like, "What carp?" and I was like, "The carp! Every time you go to the canal there's carp there." They were like, "No."

So, that's a way that I come to understand that stuff too. But you know what? The academy maybe doesn't deserve this stuff. These are relationships that are more between us and the world, and the Academy's drive to commercialize or capitalize off of stuff, whereas these are very ephemeral and ongoing relationships. But I find that when I moved to a place, it's almost like the place and I disrupt one another. So for the first few weeks it can feel very... things find me, and I have to do a lot of work to reassure the place that I have good intent. It has to decide if my intent is good. I can't convince it.

I have to just keep showing it, I'm here. It decides eventually whether it wants me there, and I'm not from this place. We also talk about how there are stories attached to place. If we're not from there, or we're not from those communities, those stories are not for us to know. We aren't trying to find them, and it's okay for us to have a feeling and just leave it at feeling, right? Just respecting those boundaries around what is legible and what is not. So that's also important, because I've worked in a lot of different Indigenous

peoples' homelands, and there are things within those homelands that aren't for me to know. I'm trying to really respect that.

Kite:

Can I ask a question? I just want to ask a question to clarify about the difference between Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous forms of listening and New Age forms of listening. I think what I'm hearing is this: that Indigenous protocols are covenants with people and non-human beings. Those are the line between that. Would you agree?

Zoe:

Yeah. We don't assume the world is for us. If we're not from a place... I feel like New Age folks just feel as if the whole world is theirs and it's different for both of us. I'm Métis. Amer is a settler. I have been taught some protocols by different community members, just the weight of understanding that if you are disrespectful, that it's not this airy fairy, wavy, ephemeral thing, and that there are concrete consequences if you break a covenant or if you don't respect certain protocols. So, I don't know how to articulate this, but for me, I don't assume that a place is for me, even the place that my family is from.

I assume that I have an ongoing, continuous obligation to renew my relationship to that place. I guess that's how Amer describes. You can't assume that because you got permission the day before that you have it the next day. So a consent, I guess. We've been talking a lot about consent, and I think New Age spaces, I found, don't respect consent. There's a lot of New Age spaces that I have unexpectedly encountered because there's a lot of white people in central Canada who claim to be Indigenous, but you walk into the space and realize oh, this is actually a New Age space. These are people who are claiming, from 400 years ago, a single ancestor and are recreating it in what Aileen Moreton-Robinson would call a "white possessive" way. I think that for me, what I feel in my gut, when I'm in that space, I realize, there's not a process for consent in this space because they've already taken an identity and assumed they have the right to it.

I think also in our work, we're not saying that ours is the only way to do it. We're very conscious of the limitations, and that we are two neurodivergent people that this works for. I'm definitely not arguing that our method supersedes an Indigenous approach, a specific nations approach. I guess it's more: here's a thing that we are doing. People might find it useful. If you try

it and it's not useful, it's okay. I never want people to feel that if it doesn't resonate for them that maybe they're doing it wrong. No, maybe actually the way we do it doesn't work for your specific body or nerve system or specific stories you're carrying. Does that make sense?

AM:

I think also, just to add to that, when I first started talking about this, I was specifically and am specifically talking to white field recordists. Because it's the state of sound studies, white sound studies and white field recording is anthropological. There's so much theft from Indigenous methods and Indigenous protocols. Dylan Robinson talks extensively about settler colonizer listening and is very instructive here – around the ways that settler colonizer aesthetics segregate, categorize and evaluate Indigenous sounds.

And it's exactly this New Age thing that you're talking about. "I am one with place" and, "I love my animal kin." I think what's really crucial as well in thinking through this is that, firstly, it eradicates our own subjectivity as a settler colonizer in these spaces, which I think is so fundamentally crucial in saying, I'm listening as a settler colonizer. I'm not listening as some objective arbitrary thing. My body impacts the atmosphere around me. What I bring to a space impacts the atmosphere around me, which is why I talk about leaving and taking leave with grace and taking leave with thanks, knowing when to leave somewhere.

But I think that's exactly what Zoe was saying. There's the assumption that everything is for you. You just need to tap into it. Which is also, I think, why attunement is so important because you can't just achieve it. Attunement can't be forced. It's a relationship. And I think particularly for white people, if there's no reciprocal attunement, it's not attunement, it's just theft. I think that that is not spoken about in a lot of listening things. It's like, "Oh, go outside and listen to the birds." Why would the birds want you to listening to them? It's eavesdropping.

Zoe:

It's so real!

Kite:

You've been using desire in a positive light and I often use it negatively to describe the desire for Indigeneity. But there could be a whole black hole of different forms of reciprocal and consensual desire. But on the basic level, what's the difference between Deep Listening TM and... Sometimes I want

to call what we're talking about Indigenous listening, but maybe it's a kin... I don't even know. Reciprocal listening?

Zoe:

What's reciprocal? We've been thinking with kinship. Rebecca Louise Carter has a concept of restorative kinship that she's mobilizing. She's worked in New Orleans, and Post-Katrina community rebuilding. It's important for us to think about relationality and reciprocity and to also consider that concepts like kinship travel differently across different historical experiences.

I think that those critical questions are very important to ask. How do we continuously renew relationships with one another? With the more-than-human world? With everything around us in ways that bend towards good relations, I guess. But good is going to be defined by people differently, and maybe when we're talking about attunement versus some of these concepts that become wildly popular in popular culture. There's a lot of work involved, because there's a lot of self-doubt, and checking in, and asking, "Oh, should I have done that?" I don't want to valorize humility, because that can also be used in a negative way sometimes, but it's about, am I happy that I did that? Was that the best way I could have dealt with a situation. I will let Amer respond to the Deep Listening, but I do think there is a trend right now with Indigenous knowledges and science. Suddenly all these scientists and journalists are discovering Indigenous knowledge, but they're still taking the parts that are very attractive to them...

AM:

Yeah. A lot of that also comes out of composition and comes out of music. I think what that inevitably does is continually takes whiteness as the foundation. I think what we are trying to do, is to say, no, we all listen from a particular place and that needs to be explicitly stated and that needs to be explicitly interrogated.

I think that what we're really trying to do is to bring more of an understanding of context and the specificity of place as well. Like what Zoe's talking about. Some places, fine. Some places, not so fine. Some places fine one day, not another day. The fact that this is not... It's hard to articulate as a method because everything is fluid. Everything is relational and you just need to be in a constant conversation, I think.

I think with deep listening it's always very one-sided. It doesn't also think about what's listening to you listening? What is actually also being disturbed

by your listening? What does your listening do in the world? Because it's an active thing. I think there's a very big difference, as well, around what you were saying about Indigenous protocols. I'm not Indigenous. I don't understand the world through any perspective, aside from my own.

That's also in sound studies and listening right now. There's this concept from the Ngan'gikurrungurr and Ngen'giwumirri languages of the Aboriginal peoples of the Daly River region (Northern Territory, Australia) written about by Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann (1988) called dadirri. It's about deep listening from a particular Aboriginal perspective. There's a lot well-intentioned non-Indigenous people that are like, "I'm going to go and listen to the water or listen and do all of these kinds of things." This is not meant for us to do this thing in this particular way. We can do it in our way. That's appropriate for us, but it's not... maybe I'm speaking out of turn, but it doesn't for me feel like it's a transferable thing.

There's the risk of appropriation of Indigenous methods and Indigenous ideas without any respect for protocols around how things need to take place and where permission needs to be sought and what kinds of relations need to be built over time in different ways as well.

Kite:

What that reminds me of is this lesson that I'm always learning, which is that negative things are sacred too, and bad things are sacred too. So sacredness has nothing to do with good or positive. Kinship can be negative as well.

Zoe:

You're making me think that we are part of a fish institute that we've started and part of the work we're trying to articulate... There's such a move right now. Non-Indigenous white scientists are suddenly all claiming that they're trying to integrate Indigenous knowledge into their work. What I find troubling with that is it strips it of the legal, ethical dimensions of the knowledge. There's a lot of people who've written about how you can't separate knowledge from place and beyond that, also, that knowledge without context really also doesn't have the obligations and the guidance within it. So protocols fall into that, you can't just go and do something if you don't really understand what the consequences might be on that place or even on yourself.

I learned that from working with knowledge keepers in the Arctic, it was just so palpable being on the land that it was not my place. I did not understand

that place in its fullness and I never can because it is not my homeland. But one of my favorite memories is near the end of the time I was working there, we went berry picking and we drove way out, quite a ways out of town to my friend's... one of their cabins... I just remember lying down on the ground and just falling asleep and the sound, the feeling of being with two elders who had spent lots of time, many seasons out there, berry picking. I still think back to that as one of the most peaceful things I've ever felt, but it was peaceful because I felt I had permission because my friends had spent so much time introducing me to how to be in that place. Andy had his rifle because there are almost as many grizzly bears as there are people in the area...but just that feeling of being in a place and knowing that you have permission from your friends to be there, but also that it felt so safe.

I think about that, that you don't experience that everywhere, and that I did not take that for granted either, that that was an incredibly special experience that I may never have again. I don't know if this is making sense, but that I wouldn't assume that I had the right to have that experience everywhere without spending time learning about how to be in that place.

Kite:

Thank you. It's at... five past the hour. So I don't want to keep you all too much longer. If any closing remarks you want to add on top, I'll give you totally happy to have space for that.

Zoe:

I think what I like about what Amer is teaching me about listening and attunement is that again, we've been mobilizing a concept we call hyper-local ethnographies as a way to pushback against Timothy Morton's hyper-object. That idea of things being so massive and that the hyper-local aspect is about really drawing people into specific relationships. I hope that it disrupts the urge to commodify place in the sense that in Alberta, it makes me think about oil is not just oil. It is made up of things that existed before us. They were each unique and had their own trajectories, and when they're homogenized into oil for a commodity market, it erases the specific places they come from and the transformation they went through over such massive scales of time.

So I like that idea that if we attuned to the very hyper-local aspects of our relationships, it also resists that urge to homogenize and erase the specificities of relationships when we're talking about these things, we are

aiming them at white settlers. The kin studies pieces, really explicitly meant for white settlers. So I think that just trying to encourage a sense of awareness of all the different relationships that make up how we move through the world. I just wish settlers would just have a little bit more humility about what they don't know. Because when I step out of the house, I realize how much I don't know. I wish that that was actually the norm in the academy, of wow, I don't know that. How can I learn that respectfully? Yeah.

AM:

There's a lot of investment in being a good white person in sound studies at the moment, where everyone's trying their best and everybody really wants to be good, and care, and do all these things. But it is acute progressive liberalism. We work a lot with Aileen Moreton-Robinson's understanding of the white possessive, writing about the white possessive. It is another form of white possession and ownership, and claim to knowledge and claim to some relationship.

What we're trying to do is to destabilize that a little bit, because it seems like people are trying to make amends. There's also a really important element there to say, "Hey, stop." What is it actually? Sounds studies, sound studies in nature? What understanding of nature is being peddled here? What ideas of nature of being reiterated? And to actually take some steps back and to actually be more considered in what's happening rather than this forward rush into this embrace of ecocide, and dispossession, and environmental violence and things like that, and just to check a little bit where motivations are coming from and what the impact of those motivations are as well.

Zoe:

And to disrupt the ecofascist impulses.

AM:

Yeah, that too.

Zoe:

Nature is not healing and humans are not the virus. White supremacy is the virus. It should be disrupted.

AM:

Even talking about colonization and white supremacy and sound studies when it comes to things around nature is already a bit of a start.

Kite:

Amazing. If we were in person I'd like give you gifts and tobacco and stuff, but we're not. So I will be doing this thing where we're holding up gifts to the camera.

Zoe:

It's okay. We're attuning! We get the sense of the gift that you've given us and it's all good.

AM Kanngieser is an award-winning geographer and sound artist, working through listening and attunement to approach the relations between people, place and ecologies. Over the past decade they have focused on experimenting with sonic methods and practices (including field recordings, radio building and training, sonic ethnographies, oral testimonies, songs, sonifications, composition, sound walks) for environmental-geographical research. These methods and their application have been developed through sound events with The Natural History Museum London, Live Art Development Agency, Sound and Music and 2 Degrees Festival/Arts Admin and been variously outlined in papers for interdisciplinary journals including *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *WIRES Climate Change*, *Progress in Human Geography*, and *Environment and Planning D* amongst many others. <https://amkanngieser.com/>

Dr. Zoe Todd (she/they) (Red River Métis) is a practice-led artist-researcher who studies the relationships between Indigenous sovereignty and freshwater fish futures in Canada. As a Métis anthropologist and researcher-artist, Dr. Todd combines dynamic social science and humanities research and research-creation approaches – including ethnography, archival research, oral testimony, and experimental artistic research practices – within a framework of Indigenous philosophy to elucidate new ways to study and support the complex relationships between Indigenous sovereignty and freshwater fish well-being in Canada today. They are a co-founder of the Institute for Freshwater Fish Futures, which is a collaborative Indigenous-led initiative that is ‘restor(y)ing fish futures, together’ across three continents. They are also a co-founder of the Indigenous Environmental Knowledge Institute (IEKI) at Carleton University. They were a 2018 Yale Presidential Visiting Fellow, and in 2020 they were elected to the Royal Society of Canada’s College of New Scholars. <https://fishphilosophy.org/>

Kite (Dr. Suzanne Kite) is an Oglála Lakǰóta performance artist, visual artist, and composer raised in Southern California, with a BFA from CalArts in music composition, and an MFA from Bard College’s Milton Avery Graduate School, and a Ph.D. in Fine Arts from Concordia University, Montreal. Kite’s scholarship and practice investigate contemporary Lakǰóta ontologies through research-creation, computational media, and performance, often working in collaboration with family and community members. Recently, Kite has been developing body interfaces for machine learning driven performance and sculptures generated by dreams, and experimental sound and video work. Kite has published in *The Journal of Design and Science* (MIT Press), with the award winning article, “Making Kin with Machines,” co-authored with Jason Lewis, Noelani Arista, and Archer Pechawis. Kite is currently a 2023 Creative Capital Award Winner, 2023 USA Fellow, and a 2022-2023 Creative Time Open Call artist with Alisha B. Wormsley. Kite is currently Artist-in-Residence and Visiting Scholar at Bard College and a Research Associate and Residency Coordinator for the Abundant Intelligences (Indigenous AI) project. <http://kitekitekitekite.com/>