

EAR | WAVE | EVENT

Issue Seven
Spring 2023
earwaveevent.org

Way back in 2014 when brainstorming titles for our fledgling zine, we wanted something that would draw a metaphorical line in the sand. The awkward tripartite title that we landed on was meant to diagram what we see as the constitutive relationality in sounding/listening: EAR (the complex entanglements of our subjective and subjected hearing apparatus), WAVE (the physical materialities of transmission and its media), EVENT (the ruptures, shifts, disturbances, frictions, bumps that quite literally “make waves”).

And yet! – the structure of our moniker also reveals a limit in our own thinking, one that in working with Kite on this issue, has become all the more achingly apparent. Where does all that sounding/listening occur? What about: PLACE?

We were thrilled that Kite agreed to take on the role of guest editor for Issue 7, and we are extremely grateful for all the work that she and her invitees put into making this issue all that it is. One of the joys of inviting guest editors to join us in EWE is that we get to experience our guest’s work as first readers. We’ve learned so much from this issue that getting it out into the world has felt increasingly urgent. We couldn’t be more excited to share this issue with you all.

- Bill Dietz & Woody Sullender

Listening Beyond BY KITE

Over the course of thinking, interviewing, and writing this edition of *Ear Wave Event*, my own thinking about listening has transformed and deepened.

This process began as a way to think through the differences between Indigenous listening practices and Deep Listening™. Previous discussions about listening in dreams and listening to dreams with family members and people, like artist Scott Benesiinaabandan, have pressed on the edges of the word *listening* itself, listening *beyond* the body, *through* the body, the body as a *tool* for listening to the Other World.

In a following discussion, Anishinaabekwe poet, scholar, and musician Leanne Simpson told me, “They’re [elders are] listening to sounds as a way of relating, as a way of communicating with plants, with animals, with spirits. They’re listening to sounds in conversation with their ancestors and with those that are yet to be born.” What is inaudible? What is unlistenable? Who is trying to speak to us on a different frequency on the radio dial (Leroy Little Bear)? And how can we begin to listen without perpetuating a colonizing and ‘New Age’ harm towards other beings?

Like most sound artists, I have spent years recording conversations and sounds in my environment, but I have had the honor of learning about academic and Indigenous protocols for consent and reciprocity during the past five years. In their discussion, writers and scholars Zoe Todd and AM Kangeiser call for a deeper level of sonic and listening protocol. Todd says, “I don’t assume that a place is for me, even the place that my family is from.” Art, sound art, and new music often fall into the same postmodernist tendencies that anthropologists do: the decision that ethics singularly emanate from Western European philosophy and culture. Are our methods of listening to the world acts of patient reciprocity or a sonic capture towards further colonization?

I often turn towards interviews with my late grandfather, Mahpiya Nazin (Bill Stover), who spoke at length about how listening must occur in the spirit and not the mind. The depth of Indigenous relationships with nonhuman beings,

seen and unseen, are tied to covenants with nonhuman Nations over millennia, hyperlocated in both the physical land, but also in the unseen, unknowable cosmologyscape. Music and sound art are part of this cosmologyscape and listening with nonhumans and through nonhumans can generate ethics. In the following discussion, Raven Chacon says, “it goes back to just assuming that one can just go into these places and listen, and gain the information without knowing any context, no history, not knowing what the stories are of that place, the songs that have been sung in that place.” Context is required for ethics, where simply listening and recording the world is not only shallow, but harmful.

What could you hear in your dreams last night?

Kite (Dr. Suzanne Kite) is an Oglála Lakḥóta 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 Lakḥóta 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/>