

ACTIVATION GUIDE — NEAR & FAR — SPRING 2021 | ACTIVATION GUIDE

GUNDGALLERY
Kenyon College

Detail of a photograph taken during a listening session at the Brown Family Environmental Center by Brian Harnetty. Courtesy of the artist.

GUNDGALLERY
Kenyon College
101 1/2 College Drive, Gambier, Ohio 43022

ACTIVATION GUIDE

Near & **Far**

Contemporary art often pushes physical, intellectual, and societal boundaries. It has the power to affect change and expand understanding. In that spirit, we have been working to make remote experiences with our exhibitions ever more accessible. Near and Far offers you a new way of engaging with the Gund Gallery through a series of virtual experiences, programs, exhibition activations, and online artist-in-residence interactions.

The Art of Trees

Buchwald-Wright Gallery
Gund Gallery
January 22 – April 11, 2021

The Art of Trees reveals the many resonances, forms, and relationships of trees. Exploring themes of restoration and destruction, community and isolation, location and identity, and fragile temporalities, the artists featured in the exhibition experiment with a range of mediums, and even use trees as creative collaborators to express our essential and inseparable bond with these guardians of the earth.



The Gund Gallery exhibitions and programs are sponsored, in part, by the Gund Gallery Board of Directors and the Ohio Arts Council.

Sound Art

Art that uses sound as its primary medium is a rapidly evolving contemporary practice. More than just composing works within the confines of a musical genre, sound artists explore interdisciplinary connections, methods, and theories. The thread that connects the work of many sound artists together is the act of listening. Listening can lead to altered mental states and an awareness that is both physical and spiritual.

Avant-garde luminaries like John Cage, Pauline Oliveros, and Annea Lockwood are direct creative influences for many sound artists. These forebearers employed the role of chance, experimental instruments, and the power of ambient sound in works that are immersive and transformative for the listener.

“Deep Listening explores the difference between hearing and listening. Though we receive sound waves through the ears these waves are transduced to electrical impulses by the mechanisms of the ear and transmitted to the brain where listening takes place. The ear does not listen — the brain listens.”

– Pauline Oliveros, *Deep Listening Institute*

About the Artist

Brian Harnetty is an interdisciplinary artist using sound and listening to foster social change. His current projects bring together place, myth, history, ecology, and economy in Appalachian Ohio, informed by his family's roots there. His creative process uses a hybrid of media, including sounds, images, music, and words. Rooted in socially engaged art, his work flows between the fields of performance and recording, installation, and writing. Each project begins with communities and local archives and moves outward to include intimate portraits of everyday people and landscapes of Appalachia and the Midwest. For two decades, this has led to projects with the Berea College Appalachian Sound Archives in Kentucky, the Sun Ra/El Saturn Archives in Chicago, the Anne Grimes Collection in the Library of Congress, and the Thomas Merton Collection at Bellarmine University in Kentucky.

This academic year, the Gund Gallery launched an artistic endeavor involving sonic mapping and storytelling that offers new opportunities for Kenyon students and audiences near and far to engage with the history, community, and natural environment of Knox County.

As part of the Gallery's *The Art of Trees*, we worked with interdisciplinary, socially and environmentally engaged artist Brian Harnetty to realize a participatory project that brought college students, faculty, staff, and community members together in conversation with one another about our shared relationships with the local environment. Working primarily with the medium of sound, Harnetty invited participants into outdoor spaces on Kenyon's campus and its environs to engage with trees through walking, listening, contemplation, and conversation. Broadly seeking to balance experience, reflection, and action, the project used outdoor spaces and the trees themselves as mediators and instigators to develop senses of place and deepen relationships between participants and the larger community. Ultimately, Harnetty created a "sonic map" of Gambier with insights into local history, cultural contexts, current ecological and social issues affecting participants, and stories connecting to the trees.



Brian Harnetty. Image courtesy of the artist.

The Art of Trees: Where the Forest Meets the Field

A Project by Brian Harnetty

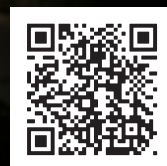
"Where the forest meets the field" is a quote from my friend, the artist Nathaniel Parsons, where he describes the area between forest and field as his favorite place to visit. For this project, the space between the forest and field points to the threshold between two environments, two different soundscapes, each distinct and yet thriving off of one another. Trees overhang, providing shade as summer cicadas sing among the tall grasses. As listeners, this allows us to imagine two distinct environments, with trees offering protection, definition, and solace. Pushing this idea further, one might see this as an apt metaphor for paying attention to differences between people, between cultures, and between students, the college, and local residents."



Photograph taken during a listening session at the Brown Family Environmental Center by Brian Harnetty. Courtesy of the artist.

"The act of listening to these in-between places offers a practical and mindful way of cultivating appreciation and empathy for each of these differences."

— Brian Harnetty



Scan to listen to Brian Harnetty's *Sound Map of Gambier*, created during his artist's residency at the Gund Gallery.

PROBLEM

What is the sound of a place?

PROJECT

Listening Session and Response as developed by Brian Harnetty

Listening Session

1. Find a tree, preferably one with some kind of significance (physical, social, personal, historical, age, etc.). If you can't find a tree, select another object with significance and focus on it and the environment immediately surrounding it.
2. Do a soundwalk to the tree, listening to the natural and human environments on the way. Most walks take around 15 minutes each way. Using your ears as your primary sense, pay attention to the sounds around you, how they change and/or stay the same, as if you were listening to music. Take notes if you wish: A. What do you hear? B. Pay attention to transitions/thresholds between environments (for example, from a field into woods). Note these changes.
3. Listen at the tree, in silence, for at least 15 minutes. This is not a time to think too much; just pay attention, without judgment. Jot down notes if you wish (or make a recording).

Response

Create a reply to your experience, one that is creative, observational, and filtered through your own creativity. You could create an audio recording, field notes, a drawing, a photograph, etc. Consider how to communicate the story of the tree or the place around it.

Show us your creations on social media using the hashtag [#gundgallery](#) or email them to gundgallery@kenyon.edu

QUESTIONS

1. Is it possible to convey a sense of place through sound?
2. Did you find it hard to slow down and listen? Why or why not?
3. How did completing the project above change your connection to the tree?