

Singing Trees | Jurisdiction & Contradiction

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Program Notes: The presented sound-based installation for Audio Mostly 2021 explores space and place narratives via the social virtual reality (VR) platform [AltspaceVR](#). This novel form of online performance seeks to expand and reshape our understanding of shared and connected virtual realities as a platform for consuming sonic art, poetic text, and the audiences' perception of place within the intricate nuances of a spatialized narrative. In this multimodal artwork, narrative media are presented via musique concrete, 3D modeling, and sonic imagery, utilizing networked city data, found sounds, and location-specific recordings as raw compositional materials. As explored in Young's earlier practice-based research [1, 2], this installation presents the audience with a fixed media sonic-art composition delivered via a collective online experience. The audience is free to explore the immersive virtual environment firsthand, reimagining nature and creatively switching between audio representations of space from the real-world and harmonically related sonic materials.



Fig 1: The opening line of the poem Jurisdiction & Contradiction (2019)

Statement of Relevance: When audiences are facilitated with the freedom to explore performance spaces, the proposed 3D installation environment functions as a platform for connecting sonic experiences and scientific data in artistic practice. This factor creates a connected environment for experiencing musical structures that focus on a spectrum of data sonifications as they shift and restructure over time. The selected combination of timbres characterizes the temporal functions within the spatiotemporal nature of data, sound, and text. The 3D media revolves around concepts from the poetic works *Jurisdiction & Contradiction* [3]. The poem is referential to the overtly analytical and data-driven smart-city philosophies used to connect digital space and physical place through the various means that data can be collected and transmitted. These approaches are applied to develop and expand Young's previous works in evoking places from spaces [4], while also paying homage to the compositional concepts and techniques of Music Semiology and Spectromorphology as found in *Crosstalk* by Michael Vaughan [5] and the surrounding analytical academic materials [6, 7].

This online social VR installation focuses on sonic and poetic source materials as immersive, interconnected 3D multimedia. Within, colonial jurisdiction contradicts urban landscapes, represented as spatial data, places formed from memory, and a longing for nostalgic and sentimental values. The sonic materials juxtapose how city data are complex, IoT representations of space, and the audience's understanding of human attachments to place. Physical movement within the scene evokes innately gained knowledge of embodied experiences of places, gathered from 'being human,' versus quantitative representations of space. Exploring the scene further presents a retort for this nostalgia in a more pragmatic, rational, and explorative approach to sonic art and poetic text, the liminal transition from space to place, and the interpretive, internal narratives of the collective audience. Provocations in this context are further realized via immersion in this virtual world. Space and place bring a further understanding of what it is to be a human, observing space and creating a place, and the audience's continuously evolving nature over the spatiotemporality of the performance.

Performance Requirements: The project propositions that a virtual narrative of place can be abstractedly reconstructed within a shared, online immersive virtual environment, as observed from the human perspective via a familiar, literal, and measurable space or as a hypothetical, metaphysical place. Consequently, it exists only in a virtual sense, which arises during collective observations and the audience's imagination. Beyond the minimum hardware requirements of [AltspaceVR](#) and an internet connection, the audience does not need to have any specialized equipment to access and share in this collective experience, as PC, macOS, and Android clients are freely available for access in 2D. In this way, the author has previously demonstrated how multimodal diegetic narrative, as applied in multimedia art practices, possessed the ability to traverse the liminal spaces that

divide the physical and virtual world and the audiences' imagination via the digital (Young et al., 2018). A private event will be created, and invitations and instructions on attending will be shared in advance of the conference. A link to the demo video is included below. Furthermore, the work can currently be accessed via the following link for evaluation or with the AltspaceVR world code "TRM307":

<https://account.altvr.com/worlds/1425985510001606941/spaces/1663203338767827524?diagnostics=true>



Fig 2: Singing Trees | Jurisdiction & Contradiction in detail

Acknowledgments: This publication has emanated from research conducted with the financial support of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) under Grant Number 15/RP/2776.

References:

- [1] Young, G. W., and Mannion, S. (2014). "U – modified" [live performance], Interrogations into Music Experimentation Conference (INTIME). Coventry University: Coventry, UK.
- [2] Young, G. W., Mannion, S., and Wentworth, S. (2015). "U – modified" [fixed media installation], Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts (DRHA) Conference. Dublin City University: Dublin, Ireland.
- [3] Young, G. W. (2019) "Jurisdiction & Contradiction" [Poetic Verse], see appendices.
- [4] Young, G. W., Mannion, S., and Wentworth, S. (2018). "Evoking Places from Spaces: The application of multimodal narrative techniques in the creation of U-Modified" in the Sound and Music Computing Conference. Cyprus University of Technology: Limassol, Cyprus.
- [5] Vaughan, M. (1989). "Crosstalk," UK: Overhear, OhM 001.
- [6] Fischman, R. (1997). "Analysis of Crosstalk, a work by Michael Vaughan," in Organized Sound, vol 2, no 3, pp. 225-251.
- [7] Battey, B. and Fischman, R. (2016). "Convergence of Time and Space," in Kaduri, Y. (ed.) The Oxford Handbook of Sound and Image in Western Art. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 61.

Appendices 1:

Jurisdiction & Contradiction

<p>It isn't in the Mail or within old souls it's a steadfast tremor in stone breaking down our affections fibrous dysplasia of home</p>	<p>there's no end, insight our castle, your knight its ascendancy seeks to advance, improve jurisdiction & contradiction</p>
<p>it's in the Quays and within old crones it's a history of lands o'er brought in entertainment the state-of-the-art brain death</p>	<p>thou dost seek impure and socially obscure dawdling educational abatement contradiction & jurisdiction</p>

Demonstration Video Link: <https://youtu.be/7qpMtKeoEws>