

**Play Space Time:
Recordings in space and time, played back into space and time**

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Acknowledgements

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Play Space Time [text on screen]

PRESS REC - START

1. INT. - DAY - DARK GALLERY SPACE – DOC FOOTAGE

We enter a large gallery space, in the dimness we can make out white walls. There are sounds, sometimes children's laughter otherwise there is a large hum. If we choose, we can sit in one of the three wheeled-chairs positioned in the space on either side of a screen in the middle of the space. The sound comes from four speakers near the four corners, and there are two projectors humming above, illuminating the screen from both sides. On the screen is a recording that was made in the space you have entered. It is from an earlier time and it is now suspended in the space. (Figures 1 and 2) We have entered at some arbitrary point into a scene or a sequence of repeated recordings of a still space. It seems there is no one there but we then hear the person making the recording, a voice telling us, "Chairs. Take one," "White chairs, take four." With each subsequent layer of recording, the room begins to vibrate as its resonant frequencies build the images begin to distort. Following the recording of chairs is one of the de-installation of art in the space and then another of children riding the chairs in the space. One of the children asks, "Mommy? Are you recording us?"

PRESS REC - STOP

“PLAY SPACE TIME”

This paper traces my work through my graduate education in the department of Art at the University of Minnesota, from Fall 2013 to Spring 2016. Its format shift from a traditional paper format to one that is a mixture of a screenwriting format mixed with a software or equipment user manual, such as the previous page. I’ve chosen to treat my paper in a creative way because it captures the way I used text in my artwork and the writing I did for my fellowship work in Video Services at the university. My artwork shifted during my three years, the technical and the creative, to a new direction for my work, and so I continue to reference these two ways of working, the technical and the aesthetic.

How can I make artwork when I’m also a mother of three young children? and the other was: *How can I make work that doesn’t utilize the conventions of traditional narrative filmmaking?* Specifically, with this second question I wanted to know how I could reduce narrative “information” to its smallest fraction. The first question is one of logistics, discipline, and endurance and the second is about how I think about my work.

ACTI: Tracing Time

FADE TO:

Stock footage, recordings of kids, images of DAN and PAPA's house, etc.

DAWN: (V.O)

My personal context when I entered graduate school was challenging. I had a four-year-old son, a six-year-old daughter and an eight-year-old son. My husband and I agreed that we would figure out how to make it work. This consisted of finding a preschool for my four-year-old and paying the huge cost of this along with the afterschool care for the older children. My challenge then was to complete schoolwork and research, work twenty hours a week for my graduate fellowship, teach a course I'd taught for over 10 years and didn't want to drop, and be home on weekends with the family. It seemed do-able, if only barely, but then during my first year I had some extra stress when a dear friend and collaborator died in a motorcycle accident and my father's estate had some legal problems that I had to sort out.

CUT TO:

Doc footage, images of studio, mostly empty.

DAWN: (Con't)

My studio sat neglected for several months. I heard at one point that water had leaked in. I went to check on it, and was relieved nothing had been damaged. I then shoved my few shelves and tables together into a kind of closed-off island and left again. I had to attend to other things and wouldn't really spend significant time there again until Summer, 2014.

CUT TO:

Clips from film, "Otiose."

DAWN (V.O. Con't)

The only major work I completed during my first year was a short film about being trapped in your mind. It was very unsuccessful. I didn't control the acting, allowing the actors to over-perform, and in the end I realized I made an embarrassing copy of *The Shining*. This was a sign to me that something had to change. With my collaborator dead I had felt his absence at every step of this project. I decided to name the film, "Otiose," which means "a useless thing" and decided to not make any more narrative films.

(Figure 3)

While working on *Otiose*, I became highly aware of the tricks and conventions of manipulating time, sound, and viewpoint during the editing process. I noticed how these artificially constructed worlds and narratives manipulated emotions, and forced a

viewpoint onto each scene. I began to wonder about the parts that were edited out, as though they never happened, taking out the parts that were not perfect and only leaving what was remembered. I began to look at this “editing out” process and found I wanted to stop doing it. I didn’t want to change history and create viewpoints. I decided I didn’t want to “edit out” anymore, I wanted to make recordings that stood up, unaffected.

ACT II: The Shift in Focus

FADE IN:

Doc footage, my recordings from China.

DAWN (V.O.)

At the end of my first year in grad school I decided to purchase my own camera and began to operate the camera, instead of using a camera person. My first recordings were made during a two-week exchange with Beijing Film Academy in China. I wandered around the neighborhood alone several mornings, filming various scenes. I brought my camera with me wherever I went. I was reminded of when I worked as a sound mixer on film sets several years earlier. The video recordings were a lot like sound recordings, where the background becomes as much of the focus as the foreground. When making a sound recording, you must pay a lot of attention to the background sound, to make sure nothing is interfering. I began to make recordings that were 10 minutes in length and where the scene might change or it might not. I began to refer to these as my “recordings” and would review them before going to bed.

DAWN: (Con't)

After several viewings of my extended recordings I became aware of my own presence next the camera. I felt my presence being recorded along with the noise and activity of the city. I saw on the screen that at times, faces that would look at me as I was recording. In one recording a younger man and an older man stopped to talk to me. The older man wanted to tell me something and the younger man wanted to help translate but his English was limited. We were sitting in the middle of a busy stairway that led to a bridge over an 8-lane road. Many people passed by me, but these two stopped and spent time trying to talk to me. The conversation was almost useless, I knew almost zero Chinese. There were several instances where we just stopped trying to communicate and stared off into the crowded sidewalk. Eventually the older man showed me a picture on his phone, and it was a blurry photo of someone who looked like me, had a shirt like me, was in the place where I had been the day before but I could tell it wasn't me. This all happened during one recording. During another recording, at a temple in Beijing, I decided to walk into the recording, to try to show it's not just about this place and these people: I am there too, but I am apart from it. It shows the streams of people leaving a building, and then I walk in, turn around and stare at the camera while the crowds pass in front and behind me. It's as though I am saying, "I am just an American lady who is here but but will be gone again. I cannot speak the language here. I don't understand this temple. I don't understand this city." My presence was being recorded literally, along with the surrounding space and people. (Figure 4)

SFX:

Audio from my speech at the Weisman Museum with Tom Rose

Dawn: (V.O.)

Upon returning from that trip, I found I was uncomfortable using my China recordings in my work. I had a negative feeling that I was taking something from one place, a place that I didn't understand, and presenting it as my own work in another place. My personal experience during my visit there was not something I wanted to show using video recordings of other people, so I knew I had to keep searching for my subject matter elsewhere.

Subject matter was a concern but so was my process. Since I had decided to not use editing in my work I began to experiment with the single recording as a form. Just as I was doing in China. I began making single recordings in my studio and outside my studio. I found that when presenting these recordings, suspended and looped in a dark space, the time of the recording activates the time in the space. These recordings seemed to shape and alter the experience of space through the image and the sound. Some of the recordings were metaphorically beautiful, such as of a window-washer in a skyway window at sunset, where it seems he is washing the sky. (Figure 5)

CUT TO:

Video Piece, Sunset Window Washer.

This video recording is very effective when projected across two projectors at body-height, where the world of this window-washer seems so quiet and contemplative and all the business of the city around him.

CUT TO:

Video Piece, “Bridge”

Another recording I called “Field Recording: Bridge” was made using a 360-degree pan under a bridge, showing a small river and the supports of the bridge. There is a nice aesthetic quality to these recordings, but I felt unsatisfied. I was not present in the recording, though I was present when making the recording. There was still a sense of manipulation, of creating something fictional and removing it from its own context and orchestrating an experience within the white-walled context of a critique space. It felt contrived, even if they were uncontrolled, found-object-like, happy circumstances, where I was at the right place at the right time; like journalism with a twist. The only part I enjoyed was the fact that I had turned the camera for Bridge. It broke away from privileging only a single viewpoint and moved us beyond the frame. I wanted to continue exploring what happens when we move outside the frame. (Figure 6)

CUT TO:

Recording from Intuitive recording studio, I am in the recording booth doing the voice over.

SFX: CLICK

MIKE:
(Talking over the talkback mic in from
control room)

OK, today's date is Friday, February 11. This is Dawn Schot Klotzbach doing
her thesis paper. Take one. Go ahead Dawn, whenever you're ready.

SFX: CLICK

ACT III: Structure

Near the beginning of my second year I joined Diane Willow's "Improvising Ecosystems" project. We spent a weekend in the Cloquet forest gaining inspiration for a performance and other projects in collaboration with musicians and dancers. I recorded scientists, trees and mushrooms. More importantly, I began making strong friendships with my fellow grad students.

ROLL-IN: Balloon recording

That winter was very cold and dark. I was often very tired and once again I was teaching as well as taking classes and working. My studio was beginning to take shape, but I did not have a comfortable place to sit or lie down. I decided to make a pillow for myself from the large, industrial plastic I had in my studio using the sonic welder. I made several large balloons, filling them with helium. I found I could not sit on them, they immediately were destroyed if I tried, but I did notice how they floated gently and then slowly deflated. I made a 1-hour recording of deflation called "Balloon." As a light source, I used a single projector that projected a blue frame across the balloon. I did the recording in the same spot where I wanted to project it later. This created a sense of uncanniness that I enjoyed, and the projection of a projection caused it to feel super-real, it kind of glowed and seemed to breathe. (Figure 7)

I began to think of my work as falling into two categories: Field Work and Studio Work. This is analogous to audio recording and to television production. It felt a little like home to me, because of my history working in both of these fields. The balloon piece was “studio work” and my bridge piece was “field work.”

CUT TO:

Video piece, Table Ride:

Another piece that I made during this period was “Table Ride.” Here I put myself into the video again and rode a table across a gap at the end of a short hallway. The sound tells us how I pushed and jumped onto the table and the image shows only an empty hall and my momentary rides across the gap, back and forth. My body doesn’t always make it across so there are suspended moments of my legs sticking out from behind the wall. I make no, or almost no facial expressions. I am not trying to evoke an emotion, and instead hoping the viewer will consider the information that is present in the visual vs. the audio material. The story is told without a need for more than a few simple clues. It is a silly story, so I always hope people will laugh, maybe I could call it a comedy, but the structure was something that excited me. One where the sound and the video each take prominence at given times, taking turns and equally informing the viewer of what is happening. (Figure 8)

2. INT. GRADUATE STUDIO – TIME UNKNOWN

JOHN is giving DAWN feedback on her thesis paper.

JOHN (O.S.)

Um...Dawn? You got a minute?

DAWN

Sure, what's up?

JOHN

(walks in from off-screen)

Would you like to hear my thoughts on your paper?

DAWN

Of course!

JOHN

Well, I liked it. Only I paused at certain points....

They stare at each other silently

PAUSE

ACT IV: Thesis Project

Dawn (V.O.)

My thesis work explores ideas of play, space and time. The viewer must sit and be patient. There is something happening in front of you and you can hear the sound of a place around you. If you persist in viewing and can endure the passage of time, you will be rewarded with a quiet story that will unfold before you. The empty-seeming time will pass and you will understand what is happening. What was once empty and static becomes something that is full, active, and resonant.

What is “play?”

What is “space?”

What is “time?”

What is play?

What **is** play?

What is **play**?

What **is** space?

What **is**...time?

Fun with text aside, my work seems to dance with these three elements. I don't know if I can define them, but there is a hint of their nature within my recordings, as there might be in the text above. Playing is the interaction with an object; Space is

where this occurs; and Time is the duration of the occurrence. The video and audio recordings function to keep the time, show play, and activate the space, sometimes indefinitely. It is also what is captured from the pressing of a record button at the beginning and pressing it again at the end.

BLACK SCREEN

It's the beginning of my third year in graduate school.

DAWN (V.O)
(in everyday voice)

I was reading the *New York Times* online the other day, and I came across a video clip from "Anne Truitt, Working".

SFX: V.O. from
documentary

25, July.

...the series of paintings on canvas that I am calling, "Brunt" is coming along rapidly. They are coming out of the shear turn that presented itself to my inner-eye a few weeks ago...they are for me as categorically restrictive as *endurance*. They are the brunt of endurance, a familiar 'brunt.' ...the concept of 'brunt,' of accepting and enduring, still seems to me to have a kind of nobility. It is perhaps less intelligent, but

there is a stubborn selfhood about it that is dear to me. It can be, quite literally, be the only way to survive.

CUT TO:

Doc footage, scanning forward and backward.

DAWN (V.O.)

After watching it once, I watched it again. I was so intrigued. I wanted to know more about this artist. I learned about Anne Truitt, a painter and sculptor and also about Jem Cohen, the filmmaker. I learned that the voice-over is Anne Truitt's daughter, Mary, who is reading from her mother's journal. I got a copy of the journal and read it. I felt like I found someone who spoke about her art in the way I wanted to speak about mine. Some of my ideas seem to be about nothing and yet here was someone who considered the idea of "brunt of existence" as her subject matter. She made an intangible concept tangible through her paintings and I began to wonder about my own concepts. Her seriousness of intent, along with her personal life as mother and artist was something I enjoyed learning more about and I began to wonder how I could learn from her. I decided to write my own journal.

INT-DAY-ART STUDIO

DAWN sits in chair reading from a paper in her hand.

DAWN

29, September

Woke up, made breakfast for Sander and walked him to his bus stop. We played a little game before the bus came where I said, "Do you ever do this?" and moved my legs in a funny way. He responded by doing the movement along with me and then saying, "Do you ever do this?" and he would do a funny walk, and I would mimic him. This was repeated, back and forth until the bus came. As he got on the bus, he turned to me and said, "That was fun."

I really enjoy the walk from my new parking place to my studio. It is about 10 minutes and I find I can allow myself to ruminate during this walk. I know once I enter the building I will begin the day's list of tasks, beginning with coffee, then work, then a demo in the Audio Lab, then a 3-hour critique, and then completing work for my teaching course. I also need to install some software on my laptop for the workshop I am taking tomorrow on programming using the Kinect sensor. I keep hoping I will find time to make a dentist appointment for my son, but every moment seems to be scheduled, and I have to scramble to find time to eat. Last night I had supper at 11:30pm. Yet, I am not complaining, it is true that I enjoy being busy and especially enjoy seeing people, talking, and working around other people who are working. I seem to thrive on this.

CUT TO:

Video piece, "Bee."

DAWN: (V.O.)

My first work in my third year was to work with recordings I had made over the summer. Mainly one recording of a bee. I had a studio visit from Karolina Karlic who was visiting the art department at that time. She mentioned that the video wasn't very good photographically. This comment made a huge difference for me and changed how I approached my thesis. (Figure 9)

I am not working with photography in the formal sense. I am making recordings that don't need a frame around them, they exist outside and around the frame, just as my bee moved in and out of the frame and towards and away from my microphone. I worked with the bee recording and created something that showed the edges of the frame, and followed the bee as it buzzed around the flower arrangement, as though I had a tiny, robot tripod that could track the bee's every movement. It was an illusion and it was mesmerizing; and it left the frame.

My next decision was to not bring any more recordings from elsewhere into a space. I would make all my recordings in the spaces I would show them. This creates a sense of de ja vu, a sense of extra-real, virtually real, and time displacement. The subjects would be the people in the space, viewing the recording. Time, space, and the distance between the now and the before would be the subject. I developed a theory related to experience when I missed a bus.

SFX: TRAIN and BUS sounds.

Dawn (V.O.)

The other night I missed my bus, or rather, it went by without me on it. The next bus was going to be an hour away, so I decided I would walk home. The walk took me more than an hour, my feet were very sore and it was very late at night. When I got home I went directly to bed.

The next day, I drove to school as I normally do and realized I was re-tracing my steps in reverse, only now I was in a car. My long journey was now a moment's blur out the window. I realized that I was experiencing something that could be called "the same" only at a different rate and method, or as I began to think of it, the two experiences were at a ratio to one another; separated by a combination of duration and type or experience. I began to think of this ratio of experience as being similar to something I know very well: the signal to noise ratio.

Signal to noise is a way to measure the desired signal against unwanted, but ever-present, noise. This "experience ratio" would tell us how our current experience differs from a previous experience of the same thing; two similar experiences, but at a ratio of difference. Difference, something that is also ever-present, becomes the signal and the similarities become the noise, where when you filter away the similarities, you find the parts that create a "difference."

In the case of my car and walk experiences, the differences are the time of day, the date, the method of travel, the length of travel, the things I thought about, the direction I was going, the clothes I was wearing, how warm I was, how I felt emotionally, etc. This ratio of experience, a measurement of difference, was

something that I could use in my thinking about my own work. When I make a recording and project it back into the space in which it was made, I create a junction of two experiences. There is the recording, especially the sound recording, where we hear sounds of a previous event, and there is the current event of being physically in the space and creating or hear the current sounds being made in the space. The two blend and share, one a recorded event, the other a live one, and the viewer stands in the midst of both.

The chairs used in my thesis recording are wheeled chairs, inviting the viewer to sit and move about the space. I have chosen to include short recordings of my children performing this activity for the viewer, in case the viewer is unsure of what to do. My children ride the chairs as I rode the table, only they do it freely, having fun. I have begun repeating and layering my recording methods, and I've added another camera and set of microphones to capture more of the space around the frame. It immerses the viewer in a space that begins to resonate with its own frequencies. Viewable too is myself, I am momentarily present in the recording, as I perform the pushing of the record button. The repeated iterations get darker, murkier, and louder. It is a function of the space and the projectors, it is particular to that installation and of those recordings. I've labelled the times of the recordings to point out the difference in experience ratio. One could ask themselves, "what was I doing at 1AM on Wednesday?"

Through my work in grad school I found answers to my original questions about being an artist, a mom, and a filmmaker. My interest in the experience of time, of a present and a past, mimicked my life experiences of losing my father and losing a dear

friend. I also notice the present and past of my children as they grow and change. My life is the source of my work, and in many ways the answer is that I am an artist because I am a mother, as much as it is because I am a person and non-traditional is the kind of person I am. Play, space, and time are how my work enters the world, and is also how I experience my life.

MONTAGE:

Old family footage, current vacation footage, clips from my recordings...

SFX: My dad's voice.

FADE TO BLACK

Figures

Figure 1. “Play Space Time: Nash Recordings” MFA Thesis Exhibition, 2016



Figure 2. “Play Space Time: Nash Recordings” MFA Thesis Exhibition, 2016



Figure 3. Still from Otiose, 2013



Figure 4. Me in recording at temple in Beijing, China, 2014



Figure 5. Window Washer at Sunset, 2014



Figure 6. Field Recording: Bridge, 2014; Installation Photo.

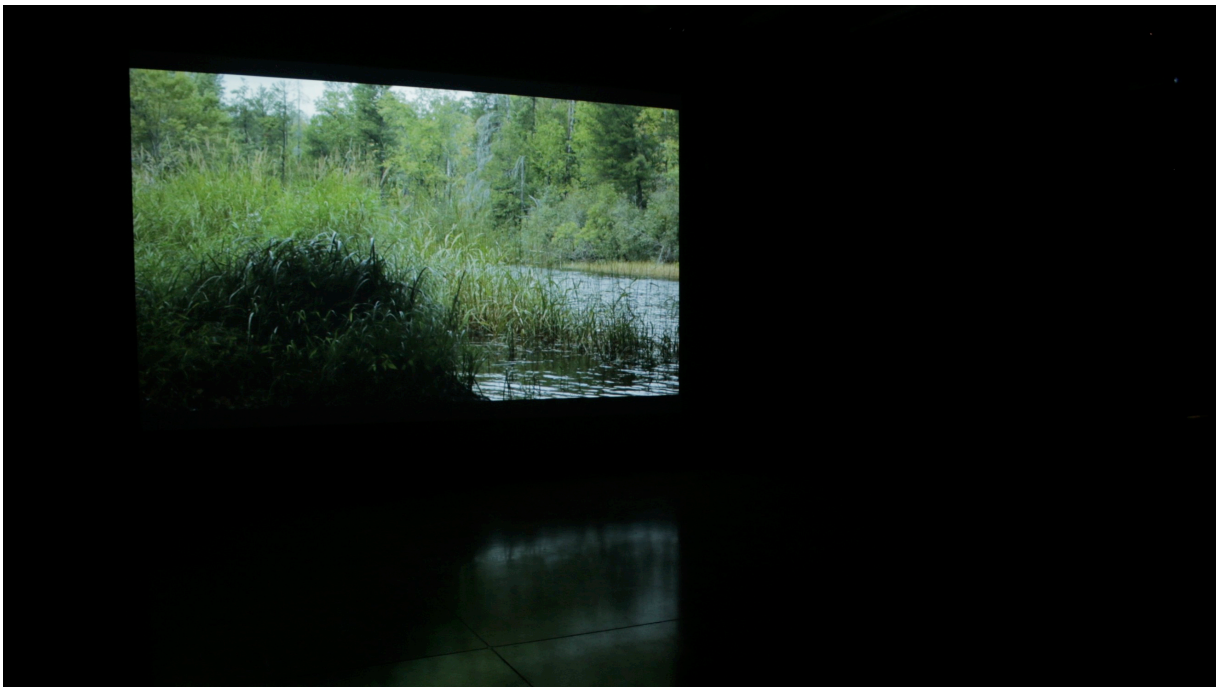


Figure 7. Balloon, 2014. Installation Photo.

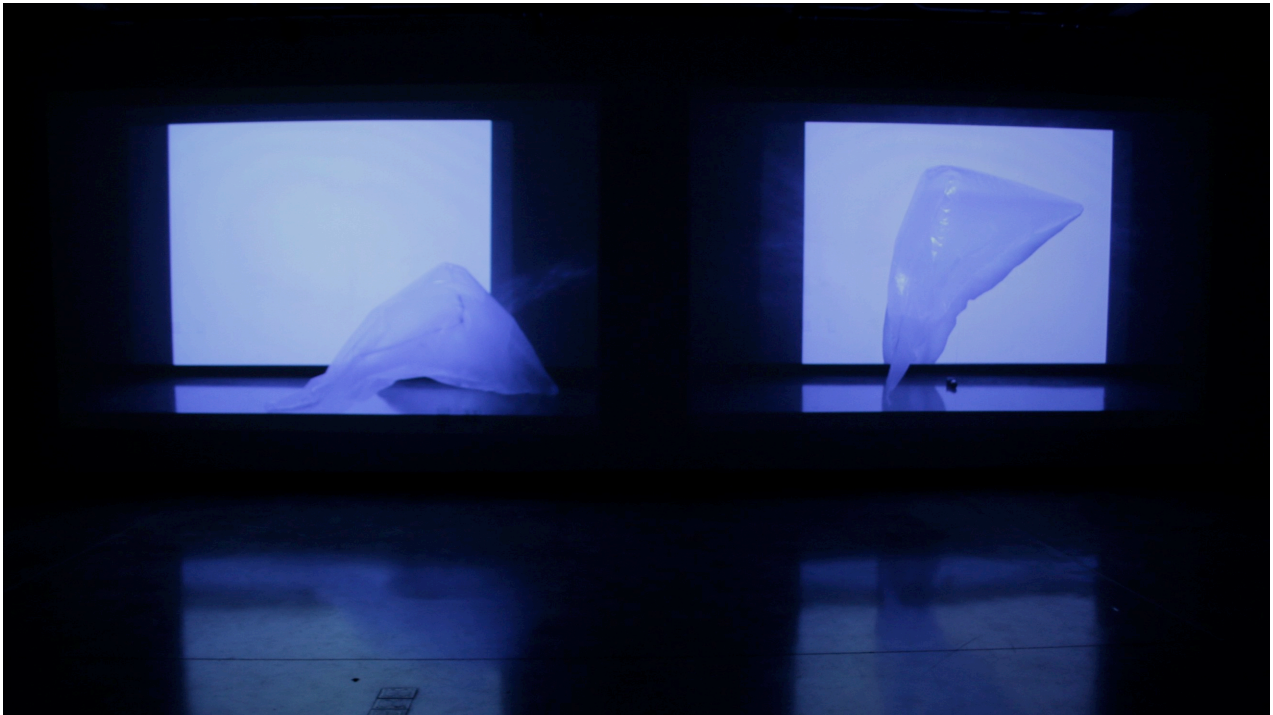


Figure 8. Table Ride, 2014.

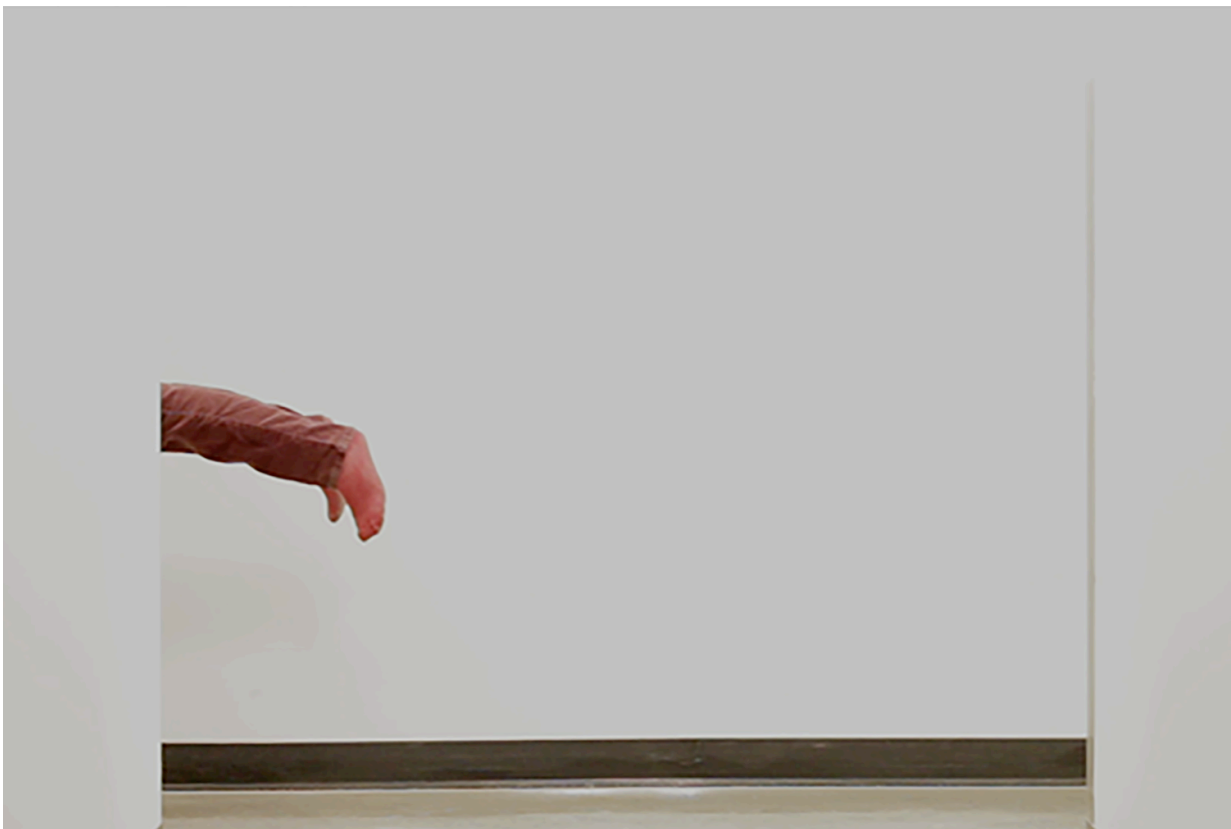


Figure 9. Bee, 2015



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Appendix I: CV

Dawn Schot Klotzbach, www.vimeo.com/dawnsk

Education

2016	MFA, Experimental and Media Arts Graduate Minor in Theater Arts: Projection Design	University of Minnesota
2012	BA, Studio Art, Filmmaking	University of Minnesota
2006	A.S., Sound Art	Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Exhibitions and Screenings

May, 2016	“Container,” group exhibition at Neuenhaus Kunsterverein.	Neuenhaus, Germany
April, 2016	“is a loop. This”, MFA Commencement exhibition at Nash Gallery, University of Minnesota.	Minneapolis, MN
December, 2015	“Shipping Show,” at Karlsruhe Art Academy.	Karlsruhe, Germany
July, 2014	“Sonic Circus” day at Walker Art Center. I installed an interactive, wind chime laboratory.	Minneapolis, MN
April 2014	“Stool Table,” group exhibition at Midnight Brigade Gallery. Video projection.	Minneapolis, MN
March 2014	Installation of “Anthropocene Baby” at Hangman Gallery.	Minneapolis, MN
Nov 2013	Regis Center for the Arts, 10 year Anniversary Screening of “Johnny Depp is Not Dead”	Minneapolis MN
May 2013	Speechless Film Festival at Bethany Lutheran College, Screening of “Johnny Depp is Not Dead”	Mankato, MN
March 2013	Cinema Lounge at Bryant Lake Bowl Screening of “Go”	Minneapolis MN
Nov 2012	MN KINO screening of “Go” Rosalux Art Gallery	Minneapolis MN

Employment Experience

Fall 2013-present	UMN, LATIS Media Services, U of MN Grad Fellow	Minneapolis, MN
Fall Semesters (2004-present)	Minneapolis College of Art and Design Adjunct Faculty: Sound	Minneapolis, MN
Seasonal, 2000-present	SPNN Youth Department	St. Paul, MN
2000-2007	Intuitive Recording Studio	Minneapolis, MN

Appendix II: Artist Statement

Dawn Schot Klotzbach
Artist Statement

I visit a place and make recordings of tableaux or events that may seem obvious or simple at first, such as a bee who is gathering pollen, but present them in their entire, unedited form and duration. The extended time functions to shift the focus from the artwork to the viewer, where their experience of the work becomes more about their personal, interior experience creating an awareness of the present, of moments passing and that something familiar is at hand but it seems elusive. A question emerges about our own awareness, whether we really experience what we think we do or if moments of past and present begin to blend and our place in time begins to slip.