

Tracey Cockrell

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Using sympathetic resonance as a metaphor and as a means of sound propagation, I build sculptures, installations, sound objects, and visual scores that explore the origins of language and challenge the authority of language for making meaning. I am interested in synesthesia and the poetic potential of the decay of language through acts of translation. My current research is about the complex relationships between language and landscape, psychoacoustics, and the subjectivity of place. Often, my projects begin with site-specific listening walks. I hike to collect field recordings, studying the sounds of natural and manmade landscapes and harvesting plant materials for use in my studio.

Poemophone: Quiet de Lux, typewriter, tonewood, zebrawood, hand-forged steel, 13 x 14 x 14 in, in performance at Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, OR, 2005 - 2011



Solanum melongena Soundgarden, Sound Sculpture, Solanum melongena, ebony, compact electronic components, audio (sheep herding at the Maine Common Ground Fair, Unity, ME), 26 x 27 x 3 in, 2023

I am profoundly grateful for my experience living and working off the grid at Montello Foundation. My two weeks stay there was daring, humbling, and transformative. Being alone in the sage prairie and in the studio, my thoughts could arise without disruption or distraction. I focused on the sounds of the prairie and spent my days hiking and listening—to coyotes at sunrise and sunset, a curious desert hare, a hummingbird's daily scout, songbirds across the tree groves, rain and pigeons on the roof, the percolating water collection dripping into the underground tank, wind whipping sagebrush and grasses, insects hopping and clicking in the sun's heat, swarming dragonflies, ranchers conversing on the walkie-talkie... I brought field recording equipment to collect these sounds and breathed into my own stillness to capture these sounds. Such an extraordinary shift in my experience of the world. I read slowly, hoping to understand more about the fragility and persistence of life and the nuanced weave of ecosystems and human culture. My experiments in the studio failed, clearing out the clutter of my mind. I came away with an amazing collection of field recordings that will be folded into my studio work over time. In my work, I am imagining how the language of the landscape is perceived by nonhuman ears, how to sound the thing described.