

Transmission from the

Tail of the Hen

Transmission from the Tail of the Hen, 2021 is a series exploring the promise of virtual presence & reciprocity in proximity to technology, non-human life, objects, places and environments.

Voice 172 hertz - Xylem 85 kilohertz - Ultraviolet 843 terahertz

Three different works deal with individual, societal and ecological change in different stages, of which the C-19 pandemic is one component.

In the first piece of the series: Voice, 172 hertz, we are searching for the occurrence of felt human presence, experienced at a distance and mediated through the human voice. Like the dark matter in physics, this felt presence and intimacy cannot be proven, grasped nor directly studied.

Paradoxically, scientists descend into underground labs far away from the sun in order to study the stars. Likewise, we are trying to study the paradox of intimacy and presence potentially taking place between two people physically separated by space, each looking out through different windows / perspectives onto the world.

Can digital existence and virtual presence be understood as an ability rather than a form of technology?



Image: courtesy Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

Boulby Underground Laboratory (UK) With 1,100m of rock in between the ground it makes an ideal site to study dark matter using ultra-sensitive detectors and ultra-low radiation techniques trying to catch the faint breath of a particle wind sent blowing across space from a distant constellation: The Swan.

The Eastern astronomical name for this constellation is dhaneb (بن ذ) meaning "the tail of the hen" in Arabic, hence the chosen title of series of which Voice 172 Hertz is the first part. In the Transmission from the Tail of the Hen series we are searching for the occurrence of felt human presence, experienced at a distance and mediated through the human voice. Like dark matter (in physics), this felt presence and intimacy cannot be proven, grasped nor directly studied. The paradox of scientists descending underground far away from the sun in order to study the stars resemble the attempt of understand the intimacy and presence between two people physically separated by space, each looking out through different windows / perspectives onto the world.

Voice, 172 Hertz

Named after the frequency band of the human voice, by repurposing everyday technologies in a radically different way, Voice, 172 Hertz test the proximity of trust in a search for felt human presence experienced at a distance.

Building on the principles of trust, resonance, reciprocity, & intimacy, this experiential artwork is done at home in front of a window with the phone in your hand and headphones on your ears.

Focusing on that which is so close to us that we do not perceive it, such as our own voice and the ability of our mind to imagine a different reality than what is before our senses. Rather than providing virtual reality as a form of technology this piece focus on the ability of two friends or strangers to follow their voices departure away from their anthropocentric bunkers - our homes - passing the infrastructure that facilitates their virtual existence via fiber optic communication channels and sewage systems, to finally meet in the echoes of a cave.

With your own voice as a vehicle, you descending down through the ground, and what you experience depend on where you are geographically located and what landscape or built structures that are hiding below you - their hidden source and dimensions are carved out & measured by the feedback loop of voices echoing between the participants microphones and the three-dimensional sound from their headphones.

No memories or voices will be saved or stored beyond the participants themselves, instead you will carry the memories in your body of someone you somehow met but that you will never know by name.

By noticing our surroundings,
we may also start caring for it.

But nature can be found in the most
unexpected of places, as Timothy Morton
puts it:

'I start the engine of my car.
Liquified dinosaur bones burst into flame.

I walk up a chalky hill. Billions of ancient
pulverized undersea creatures grip my shoes.

I breathe. Bacterial pollution from some
Archean cataclysm fills my alveoli
– we call it oxygen'

(Morton, 2013 p 58).

Practical guide:

Participants of Voice, 172 Hertz first download an app (available internationally on APPSTORE and GOOGLE PLAY) which enables them to enter the artwork.

You can make an appointment with a friend also having the App, one of you will be given a code that the other will submit to the app in order to pair your phones. If you are coming by yourself you will be paired to enter together with someone, somewhere on earth., and indeed, current astronauts resident at the International Space Station may be your partner on the other side.



Xylem, 85 Kilohertz

85 Kilohertz, is the frequency in which plant communication occurs. The biological definition of Xylem is plant cells that function as a communication system through which electrical signals travel.

When a plant becomes wounded, an electrical signal is generated which, instead of travelling to a centralized brain, travels to other parts of the plant, informing them that wounding has occurred. Xylem is the second part in the Transmission From the Tail of the Hen series. The artwork, a downloadable app, taking place outdoors in large groups spaced out over a distance in a field, a piece of grass in your neighborhood, a botanical garden or forest.

While Voice focuses on the sense of intimacy found through the medium of the human voice transmitted through landscapes of human made infrastructure of communication, water and sewage systems. Xylem focuses more on that which is not shaped by humans but rather the focus is on the local habitat: its plants, insects, birds and other living creatures such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and mycelium, as well as other organisms that are an essential part of our physical existence yet overlooked in the narratives and models we create of the world.

The 1st step in the preparation process for Xylem starts with selecting the particular outdoor location, not only in one but in two geographic places. Similar to Voice, two participants connect with each other over large or small distances. In Xylem two parallel events take place and therefore site-specific research together with local biologists, scientists and environmentalists and a sound designer/artist to understand

the local terrain goes into the preparations.

The sound designer will pick up 3D sound recordings from the sites as well as picking up site-specific sounds that are normally inaudible to humans and extract and/or reconstruct them so that we can hear them.

For example, sounds from plant communication, sound from underground mycelium, underground rivers, dying plants, bats, tides, microbes, a tiny bug chewing on a tree, the sound of wind from inside the tree, or ultrasound communication between rats etc. The sound designer will take information from the geologist and design sound in relation to the geological sediments below ground, for example, stone, water, soil, sound, chalk, lava, underground volcanic activity as well as deeper sounds of tectonic plates.

The Second step of preparations is to find causal ecological and climate related relationship between the two locations and its inhabitants. Inspired by how ecologies are connected around the world, for example, the temperature regulation effect of the Gulf Stream and the Nordic Atlantic drift, and the phenomenon of how fires in the amazon rainforest affect distant places, Xylem is a curatorial project that connects two or more locations where the piece is taking place.

The casual relationship will form the story that ecologically connects the places and it addresses the challenge of how to situate ourselves and our experience of the world within the complexity of ecology in the midst of weather systems and other species.

Xylem, 85 kilohertz and the third part of the series: Ultraviolet 843 terahertz is still in R&D. Presentations and work in progress will be presented together with Magasin III, Stockholm autumn 2021.



Image: Illustration of a motorway intersection above living Stromatolites: the earliest form of life on earth. Courtesy Lundahl & Seif, 2021

BRAINWAVE FREQUENCY RANGE:

GAMMA	30-100 HZ	FOCUS, FLOW
BETA	12-30 HZ	AWAKE, ALERT
ALPHA	8-12 HZ	RELAXED, LUCID
THETA	4-7 HZ	MEDITATION
DELTA	1-4 HZ	DEEP SLEEP

