

What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake?: Explorations in Queerness and Vibration

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Abstract: This thesis explores the evolving relationship between the body, queerness, performance for the camera, and vibration through experimental media art practices. The intention behind the creation of the artworks was to initiate a major shift in my artmaking process, one that moved beyond familiar methods and rationales, prompting a deeper inquiry into why and how I make art. Using everyday objects, image, sound, and vibration, both in physical and affective terms, I investigate the body as a central subject, focusing on its relationship to circumstance and sensation. This process-oriented approach allows for a destabilization of previous working methods in favour of new experiential and conceptual ground. This support paper uses experimental writing methods to reflect on my artistic lineage, drawing from queer, feminist, and art theory to contextualize the works and their development. It examines the theoretical, historical, and personal frameworks that inform the exhibition and my ongoing exploration of the sensorial to expand the possibilities of accessibility.

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Introduction:

Over the past 30+ years I have been making experimental film and video art and working in the visual arts, mainly through artist-run centres. While doing so, I have advocated that the media arts be as emergent as possible, loop in as many other technical and disciplinary agents as possible, transform and interrupt the status quo and shape and reshape the role of art in society. So, it is in the spirit of this advocacy that I have used research/creation methodologies that are affectively and materially engaged (Loveless, 2019), combining my profession, my artistic experience, and my recent academic interests to produce a new body of work for my MFA in Film and Media Studies at York University.

The project is titled: *What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake?* and it includes this, a somewhat experimental support paper, centred in personal experience, which you are reading now and several artistic works presented, as a multi-channel installation. The works can be read through a variety of descriptive 'lenses' such as, media art, video art, performance for the camera, experimental film, and art and accessibility.

Between September 2023 and August 2025, I have planned, experimented, and produced a suite of new accessible, film and video art works and works on paper, that together articulate a polyphonic exhibition. My low definition, trailing edge approach has been to pull back from the outer edges of expensive technologies, to push past conventional image making, and to throw myself into the murky histories of video art and experimental film, installation, sound, photography, and everyday *haptics*. It is here that I hope to find a new place for myself and my

artistic expressions. I am using the term haptics, to define my use of consumer technologies that vibrate, amplify and or pulse to produce a sensation, like those used in computer games, often represented as “wearable haptics” (gloves, headsets) but also in chairs, consoles, and helmets.

I entered the MFA program at York to reconnect with many technical, conceptual, and theoretical trajectories that I had left behind or neglected while working for a living. My proposition at the beginning of this process included a desire to explore, formalize and triangulate tactility, embodiment, and queer time, to consider concepts of shakiness, trembling, quivering, palpitation, and oscillation as feelings (both physical and affective) and to consider tactile audio’s potential in video and installation art, and as an accessibility component for exhibition in museums and galleries.

My interest in autobiographical representation, video art, media art installation, hand-processed cinema, auto and queer theory, has always been influential to my practice, however, it wasn’t until this thesis took hold, that I have investigated and been able to articulate exactly how and in what ways.

I have worked over the past 2 years to explore the above ideas and a new body of film and video works have emerged. Each one of the artworks build on my previous and ongoing interest in theories of identity, subjectivity, and the body as material; non-linear, non-normative and

hyper-corporeal. Each individual artwork resists language in favour of “feeling” and collectively they strive to map out my own lesbian feminist sensory geography.

The artworks are experiments in sound, image, and vibration – each contributing to a sonic entity of sorts. Not music, not noise, not equally. Each work is intentionally under-resolved just enough so that it can be part of a larger whole, an installation, a polyphonic landscape, a noisy unresolved room, a queer anthem for the internally awkward. The production of this new work has added to my visual and theoretical vocabulary, a new set of ideas/theories and propositions, several of them unexpected ones, and all have shaped both how I understand vibrations in my everyday, and why I feel film and video should resonate beyond the visual.

Without being only, consistently, or explicitly so, this text and the accompanying new works are focused on understanding the symbiotics between image, sound, and vibration and the vibrational literacy I am trying to develop for myself. Through this paper and the finalized artworks, I explore how the notions of *resonance* and *emotional frequencies* can be externalized as experimental drawings, videos, films, sounds, vibrations, installations, and sculptural objects. In this support paper, I will connect and describe some of the most stimulating ideas, works, artists and, authors that I have come across in my research on these concepts. Those artists (even ones I already knew well) and their artworks have all become new touchstones for me as an artist moving forward, and often in more ways than one. This has been one of the very best parts of this whole process.

The Basics:

"feelings are facts" is the title of a 2006 memoir by avant-garde dancer and choreographer Yvonne Rainer. The phrase originates from a statement made by her psychotherapist and in her biography she talks about how this notion became a guiding principle for her art and life. Rainer worked with this idea creatively in her work throughout her career. I have kinship with this idea. For me, that feelings are real, tangible, actual *feelable* things has been an anchor for my artistic practice for as long as I can remember.

A Beginning:

My initial exposure to video art was through the work made during the first decade of experimental moving image production. This timeframe, roughly from 1964-76 remains to this day my favorite period of art history (however incomplete). Here is where I found my art kin and the artists that set many video arts precedents. This was also when the medium's experimental tendencies favored serial imagery, sculptural installations, closed circuits, live feed, and performance for the camera. My exposure to this work, was also how I learned to make video art, in art college, in 1983, with an 18lb, ¾ inch porta-pack. I understood immediately the notion that video was as much an idea as it was a tool.

I learned about video art and video artists from Cherie Moses (my teacher 1982-84 and a video/multi-disciplinary artist), who introduced me to the work of artists such as Shigeo Kubota, Joan Jonas, Keith Sonnier, Valie Export, Mary Lucier, John Arvanites, Nancy Holt and later Dara Birnbaum, Andy Warhol, Jenny Holzer, Bill Viola, Jan Peacock, Mona Hatoum, Bruce

Nauman, Dan Graham, Ulrike Rosenbach, Jan Peacock, Lisa Steele and Colin Campbell (noting here that there was only the vague beginnings of Canadian video art movement outside of artist run centres until after 1970). These artists were then, at the beginning of an experimental movement in form, content, sound, performance for the camera, and feminist art aesthetics, and in many cases, the ethics of image making. Art theorist Roslind Krauss also said of the earliest video art experiments, that narcissism, was the prevailing characteristic (pg. 50, 1976). Krauss argues in her foundational essay that early video art was not really about communication or representation, but about a closed circuit of self-reflection where artists were performing for themselves and observing themselves through the camera. To that experimental end, these early video artists also pushed into the sculptural, undid definitions of professionalization and broke as many “cinematic” and art world rules as they could, (or thought they should).

As such, at the core of my MFA experience, and in turn my thesis project has been an acknowledgment of the origins and influencers of my past and current art practices in order to locate possible directions for my future works and to better define my current interests in performance for the camera and all its implications in order to attach it all firmly to making my works differently and/or more accessible and an invitation to audiences to feel the work differently through vibrational haptics.

On Reading and Writing:

For much of my life, reading has been hard. Propped up on pillows, knees bent, filthy “reading” glasses on the bedside table, I spent much of my lifetime trying to read, and not really succeeding. I bought super interesting books, cracked the spines, took a pencil to the things that stood out to me and after the first 20 or so pages, left the books for dead. To read, that is proper ‘bookish’ reading, was not a notion in my childhood household. I don’t remember ever being taken to a library or read to as a young person. The closest I ever came to reading with consistency, was from a modest stack of 10 or 12, pint-size *Readers Digest* magazines, in the fancy upstairs toilet. Or later, when (to my parents’ deep disgust) *Heavy Metal Magazine* came into the world in 1977, followed by, to my absolute delight, *MAD Magazine*. My parents read sports columns, diet rhetoric, and self-help magazines, while my youngest sister, tucked away in the basement, read about serial killers (she is now a pediatric emergency room nurse practitioner) and my outdoorsy sister looked at frog illustrations and drew the leaves of plants from magazines (now an environmental activist).

I finally got into reading as an MFA student at Kent State when I caught the new wave of art and words, words and noise, noise and sound, sound and art, and multi-channel video. I discovered music lyrics, liner notes, art manifestos, and graphic novels. Through these portals my artistic work slid easily into video, film, and performance in the early 1990s. I later joined a league of artists who would dedicate their lives to grant writing and securing funding for artist-run centres and collectives. After a long day and several decades of arts administration, glaring at a computer screen to write about my work was almost as impossible as making it. So, I am

surprised at how unexpectedly enjoyable the production of this, the written component of my thesis has been. For the first time in decades, I have written something without a midnight deadline that locks you out of an online grant portal at 11:59 pm. As such, I have also taken a few liberties (mostly poetic ones) in both how this text has been constructed, what I have chosen to focus on in it, and how the new works produced are described below. This text narrates some of my creative processes, describes the new works and tracks how my MFA project, as proposed, has been shaping and reshaping my film and video art practice over the past 2 years.

A Very Short Personal History:

Raised by Northern Irish parents, stricken with tele-philia and a life lived beside the Go Train tracks in deep Scarborough, my interest in noise, sound, friction, vibration, acoustic resonance, and performance art came as no surprise. I have always been drawn to big personalities, innovators, agitators, dykes, deep thinkers, comedians, noise makers, fighters and rebels, (ideally all inside the same body). These real people in my life were my first experiences with what I would later understand as queer temporalities - a different way of being in the world outside of straight time.

Years later, I found language to describe what I had witnessed, experienced and adapted my own life to through the writing of Jack Halberstam and their take on subcultural lives and queer time. According to Halberstam's notion, queer time offers an alternative to normative timelines structured by reproduction and marriage (Halberstam, 2). The people I admired and who were

beginning to be my kin, these innovators, agitators and dykes were embracing nonlinear, experimental, and subcultural ways of living.

I also spent a troubled decade in psychoanalysis and have watched and absorbed a rather significant, perhaps even a dangerous amount of experimental film and video art over my 40 years with Media City, the Images Festival, the CFMDC, Vtape and the Independent Imaging Retreat (the Film Farm). All of it, sound, theory, personality and image, has shaped how I think and make.

My own 50+ film, video and performance for the camera works date back to 1996 but connecting vibrational haptics to my film and video work formally occurred in 2017, with the exhibition *All That We Accomplish* at Tangled Arts and Disability curated by Sean Lee, as did my collaboration with artist and long-time friend, David Bobier. The exhibition is described as follows: *"...multi-sensorial exchanges between the audience and the work. Vibrational haptics set the backdrop to a polyphonic soundscape integrating tactile audio and video extensions to engender disability art aesthetics. The audience and artist's interactions in this work are distinguishing features of Deaf and disability art, exploring the space concerning our embodied experiences and the world".* (Tangled Art + Disability).

Providing vibrational haptics in my exhibitions also coincided with my growing disillusionment with public funding models. Particularly, the funder's failure to provide adequate resources for addressing accessibility in the arts that are financial and structural. Because of this problem,

there has been an almost complete lack of access in the media arts though these deficiencies are currently being addressed slowly.

My frustration with the above and my interest in accessible public exhibition frameworks leads to my involvement in *Bodies in Translation: Activist Art, Technology, and Access to Life*, a “multidisciplinary, university-community research project that explored the relationship between cultivating activist art and achieving social and political justice” (Re•Vision), and my work as a Board Member of *Creative Users Projects*, (2018-2020), a disability-led, national arts service organization with the goal of helping artists and arts leaders build stronger and more inclusive communities. I feel like all of the above was just the beginning.

The Mirror Has Ears:

In *Door Does Impression of Miles Davis*, (Door Does Impression, Youtube), an exhausted parking garage door cries out with a trumpet-like wail, that resembles a work of Miles Davis. Here it is metal-on-metal, low on lube, high on friction, mimicking a work by one of the world’s most celebrated jazz musicians. This happy accident also happens many, many thousands of times a day in this lonely parking garage, with most door-pushers hearing nothing of note. Nothing to feel, no one to mourn. Through this example, in the works that I have made for this thesis exhibition, I underscore that vibration, oscillation, sound, music, machine noise, frequency, or any combination of the above, are in our everyday, day and night, both recognizable and not. The artworks made for my thesis exhibition can also be unpacked in a variety of ways; mechanically, artistically, musically, emotionally, and holistically. They are unique, but also just an everyday kind of noisy.

Initially, my interest in pursuing my MFA began as a way to understand, more clearly, how performance for the camera, the 'self as subject' and queerness might hold up under the inconceivable volume of emergent representational modalities such as the selfie and social media. As such, I have chosen to share here, from that process, a collection of new works, drawings, notes, and photographs that collectively function as an installation and a thesis exhibition. This collection of work embodies the spirit of video artists who produced works during the medium's earliest and most rambunctious origins (1960-1975), explores the time-based, single-take, sound, vibration, the low-fi, and a variety of multi-channel presentation strategies (Connelly, 2009; Uroskie, 2014; Jones, 1998). My work also has affinities with comedy, early experimental dance, noise, sculpture and multidisciplinary.

I have explored and experimented with the combination of vibration, haptics, film, moving image and sound to produce a new body of film and video works that build on my interest in theories of identity, subjectivity, and the body as material; non-linear, non-normative and hyper-corporeal. These new works, finalized collectively in a multi-channel installation environment, challenge conventional presentation solutions, embrace tactile audio and speak to some of the chaos we are all feeling.

The Works:

All are self-portraits, even when I am not visible in the work. These are non-normative, hyper-corporeal expressions, with and without logic. They are presented simultaneously in a

polyphonic installation using a variety of commonplace objects. Each work with its roots in repetition, excess and liberation, takes on its own difficult subject with a discreet compassion. Self-representation comes to me in fragments, forces me to work in a self-referential way, outlining the co-dependencies inherent in the self-portrait.

My work further requires both self-assurance as well as a reasonable amount of shame. The works are rarely – if ever – recorded more than once – the work is either fulfilled or unfulfilled. There is a plot, plotted without a plan. Using a disordered approach to resist creating a logic for the works. They are reflections on disorientation, depression, death, disco and dry skin. They are simply made with common, affordable, familiar things: mechanic's dollies, clocks, kid's toys, pop music and souvenirs. They are trailing edge experiments, made with objects past their prime. Sounds and images are primarily conceived of and/or executed simultaneously. I do not need to rely on any unfamiliar things. Rehearsals take place, if there's time, but they are not essential. Works are produced *in camera*. They are concept-driven and simply edited if at all. If I must pick up the phone and call Apple Support, I give up.

This is a list of the artworks in the MFA thesis exhibition:

1. *Waiting for a Late Ambulance*. Two separate viewpoints of the same clock, on the same wall in a hospital, above the same elevator are projected mid-room against a green wall. This clock runs unusually fast, (apparently it has for years) distorting time as I wait for a very late ambulance, coming to pick up my dying Mother. Three metronomes rest in the floor underneath the images. Each represent myself and my two sisters, keeping 'close enough' time. (Video projection, 3 metronomes, length variable)

2. *IFL*— A vintage coffee table acts as a makeshift screen, tipped up on one end to catch a fleeting projection, light spilling over its edges creates two thin bright beams on the floor of this makeshift backyard disco. *I Feel Love* by Donna Summer pumps out of a vintage speaker and through a few soft handheld haptic orbs. Two vintage lawn chairs situate the viewer in front of the image. Here my hand manipulates a mean old roll of sharp metal yard cloth to the beat. Its inner spring beats back. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).
3. *What if an Hourglass Felt like an Earthquake*. You are sitting on a small, rumbling, couch. A tiny hourglass has a lavalier mic attached to it, recording the pink sand passing through its narrow waist. The image is front and center in this living room of sorts. Geophonic undercurrents moan, sand sparkles and time's brevity, given voice, is measured in a million tiny tectonics. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).
4. *Three-Floor-Wheels*. Three large flat-screen monitors sit on the gallery floor. The two monitors on the far left and far right, have images of the artist rolling around on a wooden dolly. She is flat, holding an iPhone in one hand while the other hand, pulls her around this very uneven, sunny yet confined, outdoor patio. The centre image is similar, but here the trip is taken inside a familiar place from her past. It's a smoother ride, yet darker and the trip is longer. Transducers are installed under two similar dollies, in the gallery in front of the screens, available to the audience to sit on or lie on to get the sense of what the journey feels like - to move through the world horizontally rather than vertically- creating a shift in perspective. Being intentionally disoriented in a familiar

place, sounds like it sounds, feels like it feels. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).

5. *Carol – (dashboard crab)* - Carol was my therapist for a decade, one-sixth of my life. At first, I didn't notice, maybe it came on slowly as we tried to crack my stubborn psyche, but Carol had a small, subtle tremor, a unsettled-ness, a vibration and if I focused just so, I could see that Carol was trembling, vulnerable and human, just like me. (found objects, length variable, flashlight, vibrational haptics).
6. *6 black, 3 yellow, 3 green, one blue* – These 13 drawings reflect my thinking about vibration and how it might be perceived in space, in relation to objects, audiences, clusters and correlations. Inspired by the artist Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* and the book *Diagram: The Instrument of Thought* by K. Albarn and J. Miall Smith, both books touch on drawing and the articulation of space and how we navigate the outer world. (13 illustrations of variable sizes).

The Tools

I have used a significant variety of discarded film, video and sound technologies over the years and still prefer the cheap, simple, consumer-based cameras such as Super 8, Go-Pros' and my iPhone. During the production of the works included in my thesis works, my tools and working methods remained mostly analogue and easily applied to performance-based recordings.

However, many of my experiments also incorporated a host of other (but not 'new') technologies, including subwoofers, transducers, exciter speakers, lavalier, and contact

microphones. I also made works in 16mm eco-processed film, and produced drawings, diagrams, collages and photographs.

The Reasons

What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake is a video and film installation that includes things that we know. They are familiar things, stuff we recognize, sounding mostly just like they sound. But in these artworks, that familiarity is made strange and a bit needy. They shake us in both enjoyable and uncomfortable ways - at once referring to both playfulness and collapse. I am gravitating to these familiar everyday things as a way to contradict or salve the realities of the world right now and the mediated soundtracks of catastrophe that I see in the news and social media. The works attempt to ground me and offer an alternative soundtrack to the news reports transmitting the sounds of helicopters drenching forest fires alongside the daily sounds of explosions, falling rubble, gunfire, screaming and rhetoric. Maybe I want these artworks to help feel differently.

It is my hope that this project can, in contrast, make us curious, soothe us a little with its easy humour and maybe even, at times, reassure us. Like the understanding tones of our online therapist, these works might help us tune into how sound is feeling and in this work, ideally, that feeling is worth it. Maybe more awareness of our everyday somatics can bring us a bit closer to our corporeal reality, tune us back in to the running bath water and the heavy vibes of our kittens purring between our legs while we sleep.

Vibration, as part of my video artworks (both single and multi-channel works, sound projects and installations) excites me because it challenges the hierarchy of image and sight. At the same time, these somatic experiences can reconnect us both literally and conceptually. They can also destabilize us, just a little (or quite a lot). Repetition, vibration and tactility have all helped me, at different times in my life, address questions of my own embodiment, subjectivity, queerness, and an unsettled childhood.

I connect performance for the camera to concepts of trembling, quivering, palpitation, oscillation, discomfort, and uncertainty. These concepts, influenced by a light dusting of psychoanalytic theory, an obsession with beatboxing videos on YouTube and iPhone ring tone play, has been my favorite part of the research. Exploring fully the applications of vibration, such as those typically used in gaming and virtual reality is technically fascinating, but beyond the scope of my current interest. Discovering experimental film and video art and sound experiments that used vibration, made between 1970 and 1990, while thinking about contemporary queer and feminist film and video art after 2000, has proved extremely fruitful.

Bad Timing?

The documentation of Vito Acconci's artwork titled: *10 Point Plan* (1973/4), is the first to be included in *Video Art: An Anthology*, (Korot and Schneider). This two-page spread documents the artist's ten statements about four different performance-for-camera works. At the top of the pages are four video stills showing Acconci on video screens in various intimate poses. Each still is followed by a handwritten text that concludes with the following statements:

BUILD MYSELF UP: VIEWER AS BELIEVER

TEAR MYSELF AWAY: VIEWER AS WITNESS

TAKE YOU IN: VIEWER AS PARTNER

GIVE MYSELF OVER: VIEWER AS SURROGATE

When I think about how one might draw a useful parallel between what it was like to record your own image in 1976 and the social media “selfie” modalities of 2025, I think it might be easier than it seems. Maybe they aren’t that different? Korot and Schneider proclaim: “The videotape medium became a mirror, a conduit for the self” (Korot and Schneider, 78). Perhaps the nuanced separation between early video art, performance for the camera and TikTok is more a question of volume rather than difference. A little trickle for video art vs. a flood of self-generated, self-oriented, iPhone ontologies cannot compete.

If we are plugged into social media platforms, either consuming or creating content, are we not inundated with it? Are we not performing for the camera, as part of our regular day, as a way of relating to the world and each other via Zoom? What about the simple act of responding to other people’s “performances for the camera” (heart emoji) during our “free” time? Is visiting YouTube just like going to an art show and witnessing an artist’s work or consuming a movie, but way, way, way more often and without ever leaving the apartment?

On August 01, 2025, at the time of writing this paragraph, when I typed into Google the question, “how many users does TikTok have” the answer was approximately 1.058 billion users worldwide. Many of the app’s videos feature their creators (or their cats) directly

performing to their own cameras in some way, shape or form. Perhaps this signals the beginning of the end of performance art or even video art, at least, performance for the camera, as we know it. Now that everyone is making video art all the time, and performing for their cameras at a scale that is uncalculable, maybe we have reached the top, filled the cup? Maybe we are witnessing the drowning of, or democratization of, what was once defined as video art?

Oldish and Newish Things:

As I was making works and researching for this MFA, I also discovered, re-discovered and wrote down on sticky notes - past interests, terms, and concepts to act as prompts for the new work, and this, the subsequent text. They include but are not limited to the following:

dada/fluxus

infinity

social media's upper ear

kitchen technologies

fragments of theory work just as well as the whole theory

performativity as a constant

queer theory *light*

vibration as craft

retro-analogue

pink noise

feminism and humour

how thunder is measured

you can turn your voice into a picture

re-centring the re-centred body

really loud car speakers

expanded forms started way earlier than I thought

psychoanalysis

polyphony

balloons

Tactile Audio:

This new body of work that I am presenting, in combination with this document, is further informed by the emergence of tactile audio's application in commonplace environments such as in commercial cinema seating. Vibration in pop culture has been evolving quickly but primarily at the very highest levels of commercial art forms such as IMAX Cinema, Virtual Reality and in gaming industries. These tactile audio apparatuses are implemented so that users can feel the game's impacts "in" the body, through low frequencies. They are also shoe-horned into the trunks of cars and the back seats of sedans for maxi-masculine popularity at 70,000 watts, and used in gyms for increased bone density, weight loss and endurance.

My applications are much more intimate. Though shaped by the familiar, these artworks are more humble and cost-effective. Made with old record player speakers, deconstructed ear buds, 16mm sound stripes activated and exciter speakers attached to foam, wood, cardboard and other familiar everyday objects and materials. They are iPhones on tin foil, mics pushed up against children's toys, pocket-sized metronomes, dry hands, feedback and rain drops. They are made in my basement, the kitchen and in front of the TV, intentionally and accidentally.

Each work presented here, has a kinship with affect, effect and defect, comfort and disturbance, chaos, embodiment, slippage and failure. Each both spatial and percussive. Patterns quivering, palpitation panting, oscillation circling, turbulence and bounce. The works are not intentionally loud or overwhelming, but they do need to be felt, in as many large, medium, and small, relatable ways as possible.

This experimental text and the new film and video works, mixes and remixes, associated vibrations and tactile objects, drawings, didactics, and the installation elements, as presented, constitute my MFA Thesis.

I also know that this is just the beginning.

Scholars, Artists and Doctors

I have tried to honor this academic opportunity, and to write this document, even though I do not consider myself to be an academic. Having said that I have, in earnest, discovered a depth of academic work on things of interest that became so large at one point, that I had to actively stop producing sticky notes. The following were key:

1. A Directed Reading with sound and installation artist Rita McKeough was essential in understanding of how sound, vibration, and feminist theory intersect in contemporary art practices.
2. Publications that specifically focused on sound, including the amazing *Sound by Artists* (Lander and Lexier), which includes writings by sound artists such as Alvin Lucier, Pauline

Oliveros, and John Cage, as well as theorists Lori Yuill, Krista Belle Stewart, and Martha Kirszenbaum.

3. My relationship with David Bobier, Director of the VibraFusionLab. David emphasizes a holistic approach to vibration as a language of creation and exploration, his works investigating inclusive applications of sound and vibration in artmaking. He has been a friend, a ready collaborator, and a mentor since our meeting in 1993.
4. Feminist scholars such as Donna Haraway (2016) and Judith Butler (1993) who I have looked to for grounding in-relation to ideas of embodiment, gender, and technology.
5. My experimentation with vibration and sound with Montreal artist Peter Flemming.

Some Theory:

What if a Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake? resists syntactic language and strives instead to communicate what it feels like to be a body - symptomatic and psychosomatic. It therefore owes a great deal to the contributions of Jack Halberstam (2011) and theories of queer experience, specifically the notions of queer time, failure, cyclicity, temporal disruptions, and alternative methods of alliance. Definitions of the “unhappy queer” (Ahmed, 2010) and the proposition of queer futurity (Muñoz, 2009) encouraged my ambitions to embrace the discomfort in my work as both its producer and its subject. Artists in the cinema, dance, ugly feelings (Ngai, 2005) and the pathways of disability arts and vibrafusion (Chandler, 2017), have also forever changed my work moving forward - without a doubt.

The works in the exhibition *What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake?* maps out a queer/feminist sensory geography (Moufawad-Paul, 2017) through the incorporation of atypical performance trajectories, gallery furniture and film and video works, seen, heard, and felt, simultaneously in a personal polyphony - the idea of multiple, distinct voices and perspectives existing within a single person or entity (or in this case an artist, exhibition and a thesis). Then there are the concepts of polyphonic overtones (more than one tone in a single tone/voice), as well as polyphonies which are multiple voices inside one person. I continue to work through this language as an attempt to describe the multiple images, sounds and vibrational haptics and give it some kind of definition without restricting it. I'm not sure if I'm being successful, and maybe that's okay.

They also work to define an autobiographical soundscape, specific to an individual ear, my ear first and then the associative ears of the audience. This soundscape is driven by multiple image and sound combinations, in a positive co-dependance, randomly relating over time and space, that can be understood as one, and as parts of one and/or more often as more than one. While playing off, overtop and through one another, the works presented are also loosely but intentionally timed to support one another and remain connected.

There will also be quieter moments to allow the audience, to rest, to think and feel something personal, something affective. Sometimes the installation will be also be almost dead quiet, but the artwork's vibrations will remain in the walls and in the ears of those who have been to experience them. The installation of *What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake?* is meant to slightly overwhelm at times, just enough to hold us in place. The soundtracks and vibrational

components are also meant to distract and divide our attention, to create moments of heightened awareness and easy participation - you can just observe.

When I first started to make multi channel immersive film, sound and video installations I would listen to the works first when installing in a gallery to decide which work would be on when. For example, if in one of my video works I am crying, I may place it near another work that is more quiet - to provide more space in the audio landscape. With *What if an Hourglass Felt Like an Earthquake?* I used this methodology to determine where the loud work will be installed, where the quiet work will be installed so that everything can collaborate and or cooperate without being overwhelming. The gallery only has so many walls so it is always a strategic audio environment.

In curator Vicky Moufawad Paul's essay about my past work she writes about the soundscapes of my work and proposes the notion that "keeping language out of the picture ...permits our experience of a work, to shift over time, to privilege other modes of perception, to create space for less dominant means of engaging with the world", and that the addition of vibrational haptics can allow an audience to 'feel (her/a) cartography' (148). This is the feminist sensory geography that I alluded to at the beginning of this paper. In my conversations with the curator, we talked about my strategy for installing multi-channel audio artworks that is more like an audio landscape and that it is a feminist, embodied landscape. Together, we understood it as a feminist sensory geography. In Leila Timmins' essay about my video art in *Beyond Her Usual Limits: The Film and Video Works of Deirdre Logue, 1997-2017*, she notes that, "feeling is the only way of knowing and knowing the only way forward" (120). Timmin's also points to the

importance of understanding space through tactility, as both a way into a subject, as well as “a sensual and intuitive way of knowing” (121). Tactility in this context also functions to remove the female body from its designation as an object and to instead create ‘her’ as a subject. All that said, in thinking alongside and through this writing about my work, I feel like I am just starting to understand what’s happening in it.

A Complex Field of Influence:

To understand my own desire to make the work that I do, to extend its capacity to be felt, and subsequently to externalize feelings through vibration - knowing it can be a challenge to an audience’s tolerance, I look to artists who work in film and video, who work with the body, with intensity, intimacy and the familiar. Here are a few of the thinkers, artists, projects and sound phenomena that occupy the noisy, emotional, funny little corner of my current research.

1. Adam Philips: a British psychoanalytic psychotherapist and essayist. His writings have fascinated me over many years and his publications are some of the few things I have read to the end. I think he sits inside me as I make things, telling me “not to worry, we will figure this all out later”.

2. Lily Eng (Missing Associates): specifically the 2 channel work, *Crash Point 1976* was the performance art partnership formed in 1970 by Peter Dudar and dancer/choreographer Lily Eng. Previously, collaborations between visual artists and dancers had usually been one-off. Eng

and Dudar's ongoing partnership produced a deeper, unique hybrid of conceptual art, innovative dance and experimental film.

3. David Askevold work 'Fil': is a video tape from 1970, where a microphone being covered and then uncovered, in what has to be the loudest tinfoil ever made, turns a single act repeated, into a sculpture, a sound track, a durational performance.

4. Everything by Nelson Hendricks: more specifically his most recent installation *Heads Will Roll* - a four-channel video installation that explores the potential of noise and music. Drums, pots, pans, water, books, and electric guitars, among other items.

5. The Portsmouth Symphonia (1970-79): was an orchestra of fifty musicians, mostly untrained. It was established by Gavin Bryars, John Cage and Cornelius Cardew, all Students at Portsmouth College, UK in 1970. They ruined the classics.

6. Rita McKeough: I have known Rita since I was in my early 20's. I have worked with her from 1990-1992 on *In Bocca al Lupo* - an operatic performance with a six-piece choir, two solo vocalists, three musicians, six dancers, a prerecorded audio tape, and slide and video projections. With Rita I learned about rage, excess, feminism, and the idea of queering sound and installation.

7. Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR): I started watching ASMR videos while stuck in airports, mostly to calm myself down. I was fascinated by the tingling, the unusual

microphones, the colourful finger nails and the “household” ordinariness of the objects and activities used combs, lotion, water bottles, brushing, scratching, sipping, clicking and rubbing.

8. The Beatbox Battle World Championship: hosted triennially hosted by Beatbox Battle TV in a week-long festival held in Berlin, Germany. Face-to-face beatbox battles take place in five categories:- individual male, individual female, tag-team, loop station.

9. A jazz popcorn robot (you have to see it to believe it)

10. Auto-Theory/Lauren Fournier. A self-reflexive and performative practice that embraces autobiography, subjectivity and theory.

11. Female Turntable Scratch Competitions on Youtube. They are amazing.

12. The Self-portraits of Patty Chang - In her visceral 2-channel work *In Love*, 2001, the artist Patty Chang shares a raw onion with each parent – on separate – screens and in reverse, in what at first looks like a deep kiss. Tears streaming down their faces, eventually the whole onion is revealed and the healing is complete.

15. Gordon Monahan's 1982 performance piece *Speaker Swinging* which uses moving loudspeakers to create Doppler shifts (frequency shifts while the speakers are passing over

head) and acoustical effects. Three people on three large plinths, swinging super heavy speakers on long skinny wires, overhead. It is terrifying.

16. Amanda Baggs: I found video work by artist Amanda Baggs called *in my language* on youtube while researching vibration. Amanda, was a nonverbal person who had significant influence on evolving my understanding of vibration and tactility. Their work is to interact with their environment. So they play with doorknobs, pet their cat, and sway. They create their own vibrational haptics as a language and the way they experience the world is through tactility. This perspective helped me move away from looking specifically at access as an exhibition strategy and more towards recognizing the detailed landscape of touch, sensation, weight and the power to flip the notion of access as a “consideration”, towards thinking about the non-verbal experience, touch and association.

On the Self

In the book, *On Kissing, Tickling, and Being Bored - Psychoanalytic Essays on the Unexamined Life* by my favorite psychoanalyst, (that wasn't my own), Adam Phillips proposes something, that to me is so profound, that it has informed all my artistic endeavours since I encountered it. This is the idea that we all suffer from an excess of feeling. Phillips explores this not through abstract philosophical theory, but through everyday experiences and encounters. For me, this idea contains all the inspiration I'll ever need to make video art - ranging from the horrible, to the haptic, to the hilarious.

Once I knew that I had a surplus of self, then I knew I could keep going and make art forever. This notion also gave me permission to allow my own personal history to inform my work, and to shake some of that difficult history literally loose from its grip on my personhood. As a middle aged, mid-career queer/lesbian artist these new works continue to evolve my interest in the influence of queer theory on contemporary art and in the presence and existence of aging queer bodies such as mine. Intentionally in these works, I am 'here' and 'not here', more vibrations of me, thus queering self into sound, sound into feeling and feeling back into me. The works are then lightly mashed, tossed and mixed into another version of this 'self', an exquisite corpse, that is at once spontaneous and controlled.

The art I have produced, works as a group, a genus, a family, a band, each an installation and an exhibition, each informing the other, balancing and interfering, talking over one another at an intimate house party. They are also informed by some of the world's earliest experiments in video art and sound, as much as they are informed by the glut of representational options on TikTok. They are further informed by my research into performance and endurance-based projects by artists (1970–1990), contemporary queer and feminist film, video, theory and visual art and artists who are working in multi-channel image, sound and performance.

The Trailing Edge

My father brought home a colour TV to our Scarborough home in 1972 and I became the single most popular person on the block. Ever since then I have had a fascination with the objectness of it all. The cords the cables and video's earliest iterations. But, maybe surprisingly, I am not a technophile, I am a more of technophobe, avoiding overly complicated intangible elements.

In Barbara London's book about video art, she describes video art's emergence as attached to the avantgarde, to Fluxus and to performance art (2020). As such many of the artists using video cameras at the beginning, the disciplinary pioneers were not only and or eventually, moving image makers. They were choreographers like Yvonne Rainer, Merce Cunningham and Lucinda Childs and avantgarde composers and musicians like John Cage and Patti Smith. For me, the artists working at this juncture are some of the most influential.

Using trailing edge technologies is something I learned was 'a thing' during my nearly 20 years at Vtape, one of Canada's most notable Video Art distribution organizations. The trailing edge is used to describe how, at the very beginning of video art in Warsaw, New York, Tokyo and California, artists were using the discards of the industry. As London outlines, that early video art's emergence was attached to the Cold War when the "....space race was fuelled by advances in technology that slowly trickled down and led to the introduction of audio visual hardware on the consumer market...the cordless telephone, satellite television and the videocassette". (London, 10).

This is when artists, picked up the discards and applied them to a variety of disciplines. I use already tested, affordable, easy to find tools. A trailing edge approach is my approach. I use Go Pros' and Super 8 film, old phones and record players. Using easy low risk tools has helped me take more conceptual chances, giving my experimentation a more playful yet high risk vibe.

A Case Made for Repetition:

The phrase "around the world" is repeated 144 times in the album version of the song "Around the World" by Daft Punk. The song was released in April 1997 as the second single from their debut album, *Homework*. It became a global club hit, reaching number one on dance charts in several countries.

The song goes like this:

[illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

Around the world, around the world

Around the world, around the world

Around the world, around the world

how it is generated and some of its roots in everyday applications (ASMR being a ready example).

The amalgamation of performance for the camera, vibration and the tactile potential of film and video art works and installations is no longer emerging, but neither is it commonplace. The application of vibration *as accessibility* in moving image artworks, as well as its relevance to the broader questions of accessibility in museums and galleries, is starting to emerge, but its still new-ish.

Media artists working in multi-channel image and sound installation is now familiar and well documented, and called expanded cinema, but the intentional consideration of vibration in the creation of moving image artworks as well as in its frequent presentation and its provocation to museums and galleries - is still rare - but there are mavericks and the field is quickly evolving. I have produced a few works that embrace tactility but they were too long ago. My ambition to start an MFA at York with this focus was intended to resume - where I left off.

My commitments to multi-sensory film and video art and moving image installations, that transcend traditional auditory and visual presentations, have evolved substantially during the last 2 years. My time at York has also strengthened my resolve to do better as an artist first, to hold museums and galleries account for lack of access and inclusion, to advocate for better funding for those artist driven organizations that do respond to accessible moving image work and to shift the discourse of inclusivity by changing the kinds of artists - through the actions we

take. Even the simple provision of captions, audio descriptions, transcripts, and ensuring keyboard and screen reader compatibility, among other simple considerations is still not part of how we think about a finished film.

Vibration is a language that I am just learning to use, but I am ready to talk.

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1. *Waiting for a Late Ambulance*. Two separate viewpoints of the same clock, on the same wall in a hospital, above the same elevator are projected mid-room against a green wall. This clock runs unusually fast, (apparently it has for years) distorting time as I wait for a very late ambulance, coming to pick up my dying Mother. Three metronomes rest in the floor underneath the images. Each represent myself and my two sisters, keeping 'close enough' time. (Video projection, 3 metronomes, length variable)
2. *IFL*— A vintage coffee table acts as a makeshift screen, tipped up on one end to catch a fleeting projection, light spilling over its edges creates two thin bright beams on the floor of this makeshift backyard disco. *I Feel Love* by Donna Summer pumps out of a vintage speaker and through a few soft handheld haptic orbs. Two vintage lawn chairs situate the viewer in front of the image. Here my hand manipulates a mean old roll of sharp metal yard cloth to the beat. Its inner spring beats back. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).
3. *What if an Hourglass Felt like an Earthquake*. You are sitting on a small, rumbling, couch. A tiny hourglass has a lavalier mic attached to it, recording the pink sand passing through its narrow waist. The image is front and center in this living room of sorts. Geophonic undercurrents moan, sand sparkles and time's brevity, given voice, is measured in a million tiny tectonics. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).

4. *Three-Floor-Wheels*. Three large flat-screen monitors sit on the gallery floor. The two monitors on the far left and far right, have images of the artist rolling around on a wooden dolly. She is flat, holding an iPhone in one hand while the other hand, pulls her around this very uneven, sunny yet confined, outdoor patio. The centre image is similar, but here the trip is taken inside a familiar place from her past. It's a smoother ride, yet darker and the trip is longer. Transducers are installed under two similar dollies, in the gallery in front of the screens, available to the audience to sit on or lie on to get the sense of what the journey feels like - to move through the world horizontally rather than vertically- creating a shift in perspective. Being intentionally disoriented in a familiar place, sounds like it sounds, feels like it feels. (Video projection, found objects, length variable, vibrational haptics).
5. *Carol – (dashboard crab)* - Carol was my therapist for a decade, one-sixth of my life. At first, I didn't notice, maybe it came on slowly as we tried to crack my stubborn psyche, but Carol had a small, subtle tremor, a unsettled-ness, a vibration and if I focused just so, I could see that Carol was trembling, vulnerable and human, just like me. (found objects, length variable, flashlight, vibrational haptics).
6. *6 black, 3 yellow, 3 green, one blue* – These 13 drawings reflect my thinking about vibration and how it might be perceived in space, in relation to objects, audiences, clusters and correlations. Inspired by the artist Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* and the book *Diagram: The Instrument of Thought* by K. Albarn and J. Miall Smith, both books touch on drawing and the articulation of space and how we navigate the outer world. (13 illustrations of variable sizes).