Un-registered Affects:

Archiving Dormant Landscapes

by

Marina Fathalla

A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

The Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media & Design

Whippersnapper Gallery

594 Dundas St. W.

March 30th to April 4th, 2016

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April 2016

Author's Declaration:

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize OCAD University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

I further authorize OCAD University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying, or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature

Un-registered Affects

Marina Fathalla
Master of Fine Arts, 2016
Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design
OCAD University

Abstract

"Un-registered Affects" is an experimental project in search of a meta-methodology for architectural and landscape practices of *siting*, based in notions of "haptic history/geography," that proceeds through an archiving of affective and ephemeral aspects of site derived from an embodied experience of landscape. Taking two peri-urban sites in Mississauga linked together by the Credit River, I create an alternative archive for the temporal, intangible, and fleeting narratives contained in these sites, re-presenting them as a "spatial archive" to counter notions of "the cleared site" (Burns) with a model of land *as* record and dwelling (Ingold), and with Indigenous ontology and knowledge that land is sacred, "alive and thinking" (Watts). I argue for a re-linking of these impermanent archives to siting practices, to reconnect the body to the layered histories of land and place. Merging distant and proximal histories, my installation places Aboriginal and 'newcomer' narratives into relation.

My installation counters architectural and colonial clearing of place as a tabula rasa by engaging in processes of surveying, sampling, preserving and archiving land, in anticipation of its imminent erasure. This project is thus a cross-disciplinary exploration of architecture, landscape, geography, and artistic practice.

Keywords: siting, landscape, archive, affect, decolonial, haptic history.

Acknowledgements

Contents

List of Figures and Maps

Background and Context

My perspective as artist-researcher in this thesis project takes from my positionality – firstly, as a diasporic (first generation Canadian-Egyptian) individual growing up in and around peri-urban landscapes, particularly a suburban development in Mississauga, near the Credit River with the creek running behind my house. Secondly, the project is anchored in my background in architectural design. The "peri-urban" is defined by urban grown and hybrid landscapes, located on the fringes between urban and suburban (Britannica.com). Set apart from either the suburban or the urban proper, both of which border on its edges, peri-urban spaces often appear as a kind of 'wasteland' or 'non-place.'[1] They are also often sonically dominated by dispersed ambient (industrial) sounds: Mississauga is located under regular airplane paths, for instance. The peri-urban creates a sense of estrangement in visitors to these spaces, which in my research I have come to perceive as the distance we create between our environment and ourselves. Peri-urban spaces, both undeveloped and developed, are alienated from processes of land as cultivated, dwelled-upon, and as archive (of histories and effects); processes of constantly "building over," reinforcing a sense of historical insignificance as well as these spaces' exclusion from the social and monetary economics of urban and suburban development, all combine to obliterate the historical nuances of site. The universal solutions of post-war urbanization physically impose themselves on the land.

Whether I had consciously realized it or not, I am deeply entrenched in the geographic and historical specificities of the sites in Mississauga; by living here, I

---

[1] For an extended discussion on the "non-place" see Marc Auge's *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Or "Of Other Spaces" by Michel Foucault.

am now a part of its future and future pasts. Through my walks and other engagements with these landscapes, I have been brought to an awareness of my own contentious positionality as settler/immigrant and diasporic person. I have often felt a heavy weight and sense of guilt, which I can now articulate as the weight of a privileged position, as a person who was not the one *arriving* in Canada; I was born here. However, that places me at a particular interstitial position with relation to the Mississauga/Toronto land: As an 'outsider' from both my histories of (Egyptian) identity and from the land I now inhabit and its histories. The immigrant who occupies the peripheries or margins (the peri-urban) does so due to affordability, connections to other immigrants, and access to spaces that are often prepared prior to arrival. Many immigrants are not aware that the land has already gone through many phases of trauma when they arrive, including settler colonialism, gentrification and re-gentrification of the soil, erasure and violence to the land and the Aboriginal people who dwell(ed) on it. When a developer or corporation owns the land, it could take years before building commences. The notion of private ownership then reinforces a mentality that even though the land is not being used or cultivated, no one else can access it. In the meantime, all the processes of life, and living species are set 'on hold', 'petrified' and undergo distress; as a result the land is perceived as wasteland.[2] So long as these histories continue to be placed in the margins and quieted, they become less and less prominent, and in turn, affect the Indigenous memory of what Vanessa Watts terms "place-thought,":

> "Place-Thought is the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts" (Watts 21).

[2] Thank you to Andrea Fatona and Deirdre Logue for their insights, in thinking about the contingencies around immigrant settlement, and that relationship to trauma and Indigenous land; secondly around the notion of 'on-holdness' or 'impending threat to the land' due to notions of ownership under the capitalist system.

When land is lost (or at risk of being lost), Watts writes, "it is not only the threat of a lost identity or physical displacement that is risked but our ability to think, act, and govern" (Watts 23), tied as these are to the land. For Watts, what "Place-Thought" does is to return an agency to the land itself, not only to the humans who dwell on it and whose survival depends on it. In this project I seek to draw together these different histories (immigrant and Aboriginal), and their different approaches to these sites (and both in turn different from the approach of developers, architects and designers), to open up a productive space for conversation on our histories of migration and the relationships and responsibility to each other. The marginal spaces that I am working with dialogue with notions of movement, and (temporary) settling, and unsettling. There is a sense of agency that can be taken up from my position as a diasporic person, and a responsibility to take part in ethical re-centering of our relationship to the land, via accessing the pre-colonial mind and the kinds of strategies and practices outlined here. In this project, that process begins with listening and attentiveness to the land.

Architecture and planning shape space psycho-socially, re-jig topography, and alter our relationship to our environment, frequently without acknowledgment or awareness of the diverse histories and elements – physical and non-physical, transitory and permanent – that make up any given site. The history of the built environment is multi-spatial and multi-temporal, affecting us in ways beyond our comprehension. To continually build and efface, eradicating and inflicting violence on the land, is horrifying. As a designer I perhaps unconsciously desired not to make buildings at all, but to find alternative solutions, or at the very least—because we need buildings—to find a way to respect the land, its past histories, and its own agency as much as possible. It was not until my final year of architecture school that I

began to formulate my position around design, through the writings and designs of

Martin Heidegger, Peter Zumthor, Steven Holl, and Carme Pinos, among others. I

tried to design *with* the environment (constructed or natural) – creating concepts that

aim to engage with the temporal and material affects of the site. I hoped that the

processes of pursuing ideas in the "site analysis" phase of a project would be

extended throughout design, construction and post-build, and this process became the

driving force behind my thesis project.

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Framework and Objectives

"Siting" is a term broadly used in architectural practice to describe processes of site analysis prior to design development. These processes could include topographic surveying, examination of wind and climate cycles, or mapping/diagramming the surrounding urban fabric and natural landscape to inform the design process. In addition to the usual role of site analysis in the process of development and design, various thinkers have sought to expand the notion of "site" itself, critically probing the underlying assumptions of typical siting practices. Phenomenological approaches, for instance, have articulated yet another meaning of 'site', wherein the built structure would "gather" around it particularities of the landscape, producing site as a meaningful "location." Christian Norberg-Schulz has termed these particularities "spirit of place" or "locus," wherein a building gives presence to the surrounding landscape. Architect Steven Holl, for his part, drawing on Heideggerian notions of dwelling, has asserted: "A building has one site. In this one situation its intentions are collected […] Architecture does not so much intrude on a landscape as it serves to explain it" (Holl, 9). Martin Heidegger's classic example develops the ontological function of siting via the example of the bridge, which serves to locate two sides of the river as opposing banks, in drawing them together. It is the structure that gathers together the various elements of a site, putting them into relation and giving them meaning: "a location comes into existence only by virtue of a bridge…the bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream" (Heidegger, 97).

The phenomenological lens has been crucial in my own approach to site strategies in my architectural and artistic projects. However, it is missing something: namely, the socio-cultural particularities, colonial underpinnings, and land politics affecting the meaning of place, and our relationship to the land and built environment. Indigenous methodologies, in their approach to these questions, present another model, one based in ontology, cosmology, and what the scholar Vanessa Watts terms "Place-Thought." "Haptic geographies" approach the landscape with an attunement to its affective, and experiential properties, encouraging a kind of 'feeling' the land. This approach, which is inherent in Indigenous ontology, and therefore in the sites examined in this project, link the present condition of sites to their histories pre-colonization, and to the traumas that have affected the soil over time. Revisiting siting practices with a consideration of the land's historical specificity necessitates new models from a variety of perspectives, including those presented by Indigenous scholars, as a means of rediscovering the possibilities of alternative engagements with site.

"Un-registered Affects[3]; *Archiving Dormant Landscapes*" engages with the question of "siting" in architecture and landscape design, and proposes an alternate framing (a meta-methodology) of siting through artistic practice, to critically re-imagine a different approach to site. It also brings forward the problem of representation and modes of documenting histories and affects of the land, through an engagement with the notion of "archive." This term functions here in a number of ways: drawing on the work of Indigenous scholars and contemporary geographers, I posit the landscape itself as an archive (of traumas, of colonization, of development,

---

[3] My alternative site analysis seeks to archive an affective perception of place. The archives that are land and body, have the *potential* to affect and be affected, collect and transmit intensities, and to accumulate them (Seigworth and Gregg, 2). The affective traces in my installation –(passing narratives, plant residues, sonic elements)– are bound up both in the site's physical attributes, which have the *potential* to *gather* historical and metaphysical traces by the way activity moves through and circulates around them, and in my own embodied engagement with these sites, which is only partly revealed by the videos, soundtracks, images and objects on display here.

but also of peoples, movement, seasons, weather, and other ephemeral effects); drawing on historical archives, I present the work in my exhibition as an alternative archive – or alternative *to* the archive – of this site; finally, I engage with theoretical discussions of the archive's violence, to hold open the possibility, via artistic practice, or a partial and fragmentary archive that would resist the violence of the archive as a site of representation.

The project does not claim to fully represent these sites in all their affective, historical, and ephemeral processes of *becoming*, but welcomes the complexities and ambiguities both of site and its representation as a productive space for exploration, and as the material and questions which fuel my artistic practice. My installation engages the tensions inherent in the landscape and its representations by exploring the concept of a "haptic archive/history" of the sites, developed through an artistic engagement with the land. The works in my exhibition seek to indicate my own embodied, experiential process of connecting with the land, and thus to engage the viewer in that *process*, without seeking to posit the works as anything more than a partial, residual archive of this engagement. In this way, and in the unfinished, multiple and ambiguous nature of the works themselves, I seek to intervene in (and problematize) architectural methodologies of siting, through surveying, observing, performing and sampling the land, testing ways of 'feeling the land' and its histories. In critical dialogue with standard modes of analyzing, documenting, and representing site, then, my practice offers alternate modalities that consider affective and unquantifiable elements, including the sonic, poetic, tactile and temporal materials of the landscape.

The buildings and landscapes that I examine in this project are at the margins of architecture and architecture history, standing as "un-registered" at the fringes of archival representation, and on the social and political margins; institutional

documentation of Indigenous history is frequently underrepresented, or framed through a racialized lens. To engage with these sites, I adopt a hybrid model drawn from affect theory (Gregg and Seigworth), Indigenous methodology (Watts, Todd), and Mark Paterson's "haptic geography," as a framework to explore the possibility of feeling (the un-registered) histories, *before* knowing them. This perspective assumes the land, its animal-plant life, and cyclical patterns, is *dormant*: "asleep, temporarily inactive, having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period of time; in a deep sleep." In emphasizing *feeling* history, and *feeling* the land, both affect theory and Indigenous ways of knowing point towards hidden depths in the landscape, which is "alive and thinking," and dormant: asleep rather than dead. The crossover between these ontologies and methodologies allows for exploring the links between land, siting, and archive, and the status of both land and building as archive/historical material and as dwelling (Tim Ingold). This thesis is structured into three thematic categories: *siting*, *landscape*, and *archive*, with each connecting to a proposed alternative meta-methodology through an engagement with two peri-urban landscapes in Missisauga.[4] I propose an alternative model of site, and siting, via an installation that places Aboriginal narratives of the Credit River Anishinaabe and my own 'newcomer' narrative into relation, to challenge both the erasure of history and the imposition of a totalizing knowledge onto the landscape.

In this thesis and exhibition, I engage two primary sites, re-situating them as archives, and as affective locations of *becoming*, through processes of archival mining, peripatetic walking, and listening/recording, to create artistic works that examine the un-registered, marginalized and ephemeral in landscape – precisely those elements which architect Carol Burns posits are lost in typical practices of site analysis. I primarily dialogue with the concept of the "cleared site", with its notions

---

[4] "Mississauga" translates as meaning "River of the North of Many Mouths."

of erasure, and distancing from formative, settler narratives and histories of our varying (Indigenous, vs. settler, diasporic) ontological relationships to the landscape. Prior to development, and pending transformation, the sites are threatened with having their tactile histories erased or cleared: an erasure of the layered affects that metaphysically register onto the landscape as traces, and giving way to a physical erasure through development.

Having previously engaged in museum and archival practices at several institutions, methods of cataloguing, preservation, and exhibition design have influenced my practice. This thesis brings together methods of representation crossing between the "faux" archival (annotation, documentation), the artistic (drawing), and the mechanisms of display (optical technologies, microfiche readers, the vitrine, plinths), toward the articulation of a new, counter-approach to "siting." In short, my work seeks to retain what escapes archival preservation and typical siting practices, while at the same time pointing to the inadequacy of this retention, or of any representation that would fully preserve or retain the nature of a site. Engaging with the "haptic geographies" of site, I produce a 'spatial archive' that is at once a record of the site and of my embodied encounter with it. These modes of inquiry seek to highlight the relationships between land, body, archive, affect and knowledge. Through my position as artist-researcher, I reflect on the mechanisms of viewership, access, and display, including the material of preservation and storage, to consider the ways in which knowledge about land and the landscape are framed and mediated between viewers and the histories of land. The installation thus reflects my ongoing dialogue with the tensions between the erasure of elements in the processes of siting, and the "history" of their tactile presence.

Through my research at the Peel Art Gallery, Museum, and Archives (PAMA), and through my own haptic processes of site analysis resulting in video and

sound installation, the affective layers of the sites begin to reveal themselves. I engage in peripatetic walking, I record and examine the sites from multiple perspectives, as I consider their broader geographical contexts. I place the material of ephemerality against the archival interface as a tactic to maintain distancing between the viewer and the pieces, thus resisting a proximal intimacy, or too-close view. This produces a tension in the viewer, who wants to know more; precisely the tension that I feel when approaching a landscape that may have historical value and an affective investment for me personally, but from which there is clearly felt to be missing or hidden information. Taking this distancing as a positive element in site analysis, I suggest that it is only through this feeling that one can see how sites resist the will to closure and dominating knowledge inherent in standard processes of development.
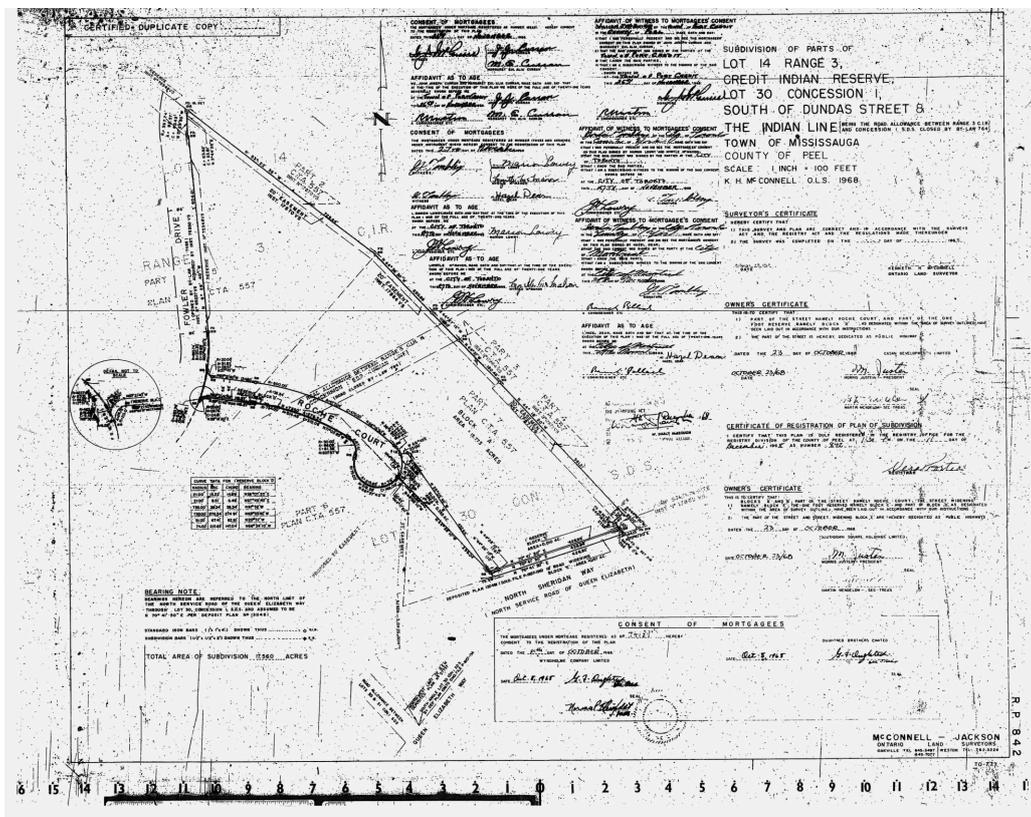
Figure 1. Plot drawing of La Roche site, shows the CIR boundary line. PAMA collection.

1.2.1. "CIRiver"

Both the sites I chose to engage with are located between recognizable places – city, suburb – and can in fact be seen as thresholds or sites of transition between these. They are also sites of movement, connecting points to larger geographical contexts. The site of the Credit Indian Reserve (CIR), for example, is located directly adjacent to the entrance to the QEW, while the train tracks adjacent to the Streetsville site connect the suburban to Union Station in Toronto, and further west to Milton. I chose the CIR site through a process of peripatetic, psychogeographic driving. A personal, affective response drew me to research the site's history further. I was curious about the monumental scale of the tall tower, and its physical subjection to time and decay, as well as its odd un-sitedness, surrounded by an open field on one side and featuring varying topography, with a view to the city and the highway divide. The space mirrors many other buildings built in the 1970s and 1980s near the (invisible) borderlines of "undeveloped" land. In my research, I discovered that many immigrants of various South Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds and religions inhabit the building. Newcomers tend to pass through such buildings on the periphery of major cities as a temporary dwelling place, before moving into larger immigrant communities in various Toronto suburbs (2006 peel region census).
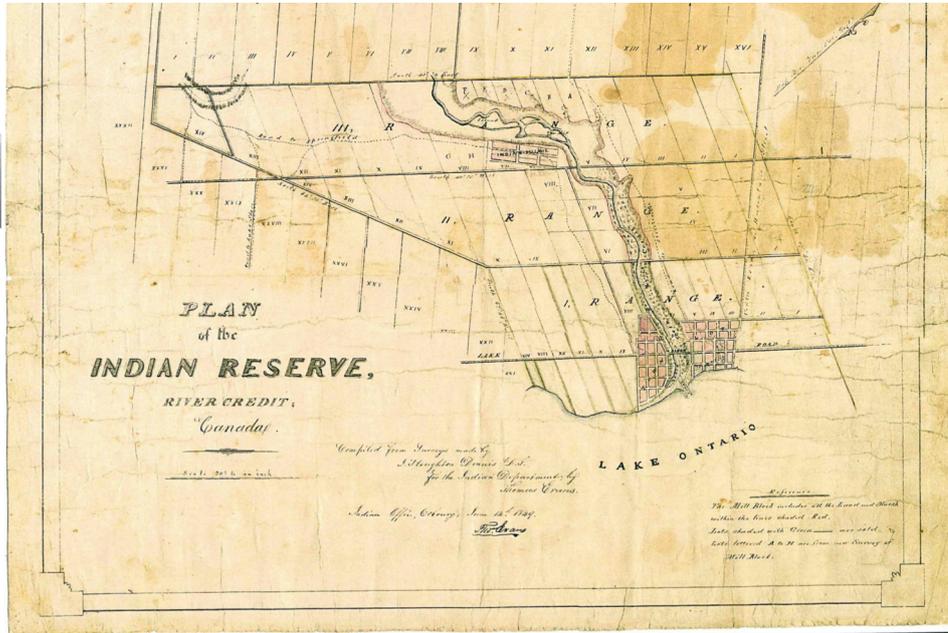
Figure 2. Plan of the Credit Indian Reserve, 1849. PAMA collection.

I researched the historical plots and aerial views of the CIR site at the PAMA collection with the building's address on La Roche. My intention was to engage with the traditional forms of representation of plotting and aerial views, as well as the use of property lines as colonial lines that objectify land by way of measurement. The process of archival mining led me to a fascinating discovery: the site of the Tall Tower on La Roche is bisected by the former boundary line of the Credit Indian Reserve. The plot drawing reveals a history of colonized land, which was sold by the British Crown in 1847 to European settlers. The borders of the CIR were measured one mile on either side of the Credit River. This finding was an enlightening discovery for me in my process of siting, because of the large gap it opened up between Western and Indigenous philosophies of land. The natural and phenomenal feature of the river as a reference point is in stark contrast to the colonial divisions of land by 200 square acre plots. To me, it was instantly apparent that I should engage in a practice of walking and field recording alongside the Credit River. As I record the sounds of this place, I notice that because of the proximity of the river to major highways, at many points there is a sonic invasion of industry that drowns out nature. As it developed, the piece thus came to explore shifts and spatio-temporal

relationships between divisions of land, and the place of this small plot to the broader

relation of the natural and urban fabric of Mississauga (and even to neighbouring

major cities). I sought here to place the newcomer narrative, based in my own

experience, into perspective with the site's identity pre-1970s, and into relation with

the narrative of Aboriginal peoples. The film and sound installation weaves together

movements/histories in and through the site of the Tall Tower to include spatial and

physical layers and registers. I engage this movement, passage, unregistered feelings

and passing conversations through my family narrative; moving through the city by

car, listening to iconic Egyptian singer Omo Kalthoum sing *Enta Omri*. Her music

reminds me of traveling with my parents on road trips across Ontario in my

childhood. My parents and I perform a kind of re-experience of that memory, as we

play the song and drive through the city. My mom translates some of the words to me,

and we are singing together. I used the song in a previous installation piece, but here I

wanted to foreground our conversations as personal and intimate, fleeting moments.

This is connected with the typology of the tall tower located on the fringes of the city,

often a liminal and temporary space for newcomers arriving in Canada. My parents

have experienced this, temporarily living in a family friend's basement; the notion of

arrival, because I was too young to remember it, is a liminal threshold that defines my

identity as a settler/diasporic person, and therefore I am drawn to look back on that

history, to connect with it as my family's formative history of settling in Canada (and

within a broader history of settlement), and in the context of this new landscape. To

come back to the "origin" is to understand, in this case, my own personal history of

space and place.

The "newcomer" experience, with which I can personally relate, is in relation to a

broader history of newcomers on this site, whose pre-colonial history is that of

Indigenous, Anishinaabe land. The Credit River, which geographically cuts through

Mississauga's landscape down to Lake Ontario, and further north through Brampton, connects both of my sites of inquiry. In the installation, I want the viewer to experience a sense of being embraced and held by the river as it sonically re-orients the body in space/place.

1.2.2. "Dormant Streetsville"

As someone who lives in this community, the Streetsville site is part of my everyday life. I chose it because it is the perfect opportunity to engage with sites that are on the cusp of significant changes, existing under a perpetual fear of erasure, as well as for its connection to various strata of physical and material history. As an interface between Streetsville and the rest of the city of Mississauga, this site works within my thematic and conceptual framework for engaging with transitory sites, with the peri-urban, and with a notion of site as in process, always *becoming*, rather than a fixed or static entity.

In 2015, Mississauga News reported that the Credit Mills site is confirmed for re-development to a commercial retail plaza complex, and that detailed plans are forthcoming (heritagemississauga.com). Meeting minutes from years leading up to the report show the continuous resistance to this project from residents, indicated by the pending status of the project's approval from the Ontario Municipal Board for several years. Residents are concerned that the area will be too congested, with the train station located just across the street, and tracks adjacent to the site (Planning and Development Committee meeting, 2013). There have also been disputes about the square footage proposed by the Credit Mills Development Corporation. Their proposed 6500 ft^2 plan passed through OMB despite the city's suggested cap at 5000 ft^2.

On the surface, its adjacency to the train tracks and flourmill risk this site being perceived as inconsequential, or even derelict – something registered in residents' concerns, which center on the size of the project and its impact on congestion, rather than with the physical imposition of a building on this site more generally.

1.3.   The Colonial Flipside of Modernism

Architect and theorist Carol Burns underlines colonial approaches to land and landscape in her critique of architectural site strategies, distilling these strategies into two basic models: the "cleared" site and the "constructed" site. In *Drawing/ Building/Text*, Burns writes:

> The idea of the cleared site is based on an assumption that the site as received is unoccupied, lacking any prior constructions and empty of content. It posits space as objective and "pure," a neutral mathematical object…The disregard for natural constructions betrays the presumption that they are politically and ideologically immaterial…To rationalize land is to objectify it profoundly (150).

Here, the act of line making, and the notions of property and boundary demarcation within which the architect can place their intervention, is for Burns a colonial objectification and reduction of the land's attributes into measured and geometrical parts. The "constructed site" model, on the other hand, isolates particular attributes of the existing landscape to physically build upon them as conceptual bases for design: another reduction of landscape to its singular features. Both of these paradigms, prominent in architectural processes, have played key roles in colonial representations of the landscape.

The description and representation of site in typical architecture and landscape practices itself constitutes a form of colonial marking. Concerned with incorporating and representing the landscape as empty or containing only useful markers for development, these strategies also miss the landscape's temporality, including cycles of weathering, ephemeral elements, and affects. The very notion of

ownership and boundary have frequently been seen as a Western construct imposed on the North American landscape, while from time immemorial Indigenous people had shared the land, whether in settled, semi- or fully nomadic lifestyles. In "Radical Migrations through Anishinaabewaki, An Indigenous Re-Mapping of the Great Lakes," artist Dylan Miner maps native stories across the Great Lakes through interviews with contemporary Indigenous artists, asserting the connection Anishinaabe people have to their land through their complex modes of representation or mapping:

> In the Great Lakes, the Anishinaabe carved and painted images onto rock, marking the land itself as map. Moreover, members of the Anishinaabe Midewiwin society created countless incised birchbark scrolls that demarcate both natural and spiritual landscapes…the body and land could both become the map, as well as the area mapped (Miner, 9).

The artists Miner interviews stress that the first step in decolonizing the landscape is acknowledging Indigenous histories, in order to engage in a process of re-mapping and re-linking the Indigenous body to the land. At the same time, Miner recognizes that the embedding of physical boundaries in the built environment impedes our ability today both to access these histories physically and to conceive of them spiritually. For others, including the urban theorist Bjorn Sletto, the notion of "counter-mapping" is itself problematic, potentially negating Indigeneity in conjunction with the history of the land as *becoming*. "Cartography *erases*: it erases omissions, intentions, forms of production, and strategies of generalization in order to represent itself as a secure representation of truth instead of an ontologically unstable object always in the making (Sletto, 926, My emphasis).

In place of the "ontologically unstable object" that is the map, we can posit the importance today of a renewed dialogue between land, history, and identity as *in process*, and of unfixed histories, with striated temporalities. In this thesis, I enter into a dialogue with Burns' "cleared site," and its erasure of both histories and affective

site sensibilities, moving beyond the site as a fixed "plan" or plot to a more open and inclusive engagement with its multiple and ephemeral identities. In this, and alongside Indigenous methodology and ontology, I also draw on geographer Tim Ingold's discussion of land as *archive* in "The Temporality of the Landscape." My cross-disciplinary artistic practice draws on a range of fields, including landscape architecture and archaeology; in the case of the latter, I am not concerned to follow a rigorous practice of archaeological investigation but rather to treat different materials – archival photographs, plant life – as archaeological fragments and samples pointing toward dwelling and life on these sites.

It is easy for contemporary artists and architects to criticize modern architecture and urbanism as being insensitive to the particularities of site and context. In an essay titled "The Suppressed Site," Wendy Redfield acknowledges the ideological frameworks that tend to define and haunt modernist architecture:

> [A] foundational premise of modernism, equally antagonistic to serious site theorizing is the goal of proposing universal strategies in place of local or regionally developed traditions…the rhetoric of the early twentieth century manifestos that provided the theoretical basis for modernism and characterized the subsequent analysis of its works is pervaded by a tendency to favour the universal and the abstract over local variation and specificity (186).

Both modern architectural discourse and the typical reaction against it privilege spatial concept and form, overshadowing or omitting other narratives with relation to site strategies. The history of modern architecture, often focusing its lens on Le Corbusier and the post-war 'Tall Tower' apartment complex, tends to emphasize how buildings become like art objects in the landscape, planted on a site with no concern for context; existing seemingly above and apart from it. Redfield writes about Corbusier's *pilotis* as akin to the neoclassical plinth that "provided Beaux-Arts-trained designers one technique for staging the perfected architectural object on a tabula rasa, unhindered by the corrupt and varying ground. (189)" This gesture of

physically separating the architectural object from the land visually symbolizes a power relationship and conjuncture between architecture and its context. De-rooted from their site or from any one site, these buildings are framed as commodities, reproducible over many sites.

My own work in this thesis aligns itself with Tim Ingold's argument for the land *as* archive and record, arguing for a re-linking to the earth's material ridges, details, and archaeological specificity, as well as its ephemeral and affective sensibilities. Wanting to keep open the often metaphysical and unquantifiable elements of site, I have chosen to pursue artistic practices as an ideal space for exploration into processes of landscape and architecture development. Both of the sites I engage with offer different particularities that require unique responses. In "Dormant Streetsville", I focus on the materiality of the farmland, as haptic movement through linear ridges of land. These are emphasized in parallel with viewing landscape records through the lens of a microfiche reader in settings like PAMA. The metaphysical is well articulated in relation to "affective intensities" cycling back onto the site and land, wherein the affective layers are *felt*, accumulating the past and the future onto the land. Otherwise, in "CIRiver" I engage a 'spatial archive.' I film the movement of 'circling' the Tall Tower, viewing it from different points of reference, and layering narratives and histories. Here the Tower "gathers" a historical moment, wherein the visual landscape separates between Anishinaabe and 'newcomer' histories. These narratives/histories shift in the film, and sonic installation between foreground and background.

Figure 3. Aerial View, Credit River La Roche site 1967 (before the Tall Tower was built).
PAMA collection.

1.4.   Haptic Geography

In his article "Haptic Geographies: ethnography, haptic knowledges and

sensuous dispositions" (2009), the geographer Mark Paterson responds to a major

lacuna within the field of Human Geography, which he identifies as haptic

knowledge, somatic sensibility, and their role in knowledge production as qualitative

material for empirical research, not only within human geography but its contiguous

fields of architecture, anthropology, and cultural history. What he terms "somatic

sensations" include internally felt bodily sensations (beyond the standard definition of haptic as associated solely with touch), and the relationships between muscular tension, temperature, and pain in connection with the environment, as part of what he more broadly terms 'the haptic system': "The haptic system is an apparatus by which the individual best gets information about both his environment and his body. He feels an object relative to the body and the body relative to an object. It is the perceptual system by which animals and men are literally in touch with the environment" (768). Paterson describes the relationships between walking and reflexive knowledge, and a perception of space that can be literally felt through the ground, in the feet (Paterson, 777). Advocating for an embodied ethnography through walking in a landscape, Paterson turns back to the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty for support:

> What Merleau-Ponty identifies as a tactile perception of space is a good starting point for an embodied ethnography of walking, thinking of our embodied everyday stance not as a the separation of mind from body, head from feet, but as diverse strands of sense returns from limbs, viscera, sense organs and muscular movement that variously combine as an almost elastic sensory-spatial envelope, a sensorium in action (777).

The methods Paterson outlines of walking, and of a somatic practice I collectively summarize as 'feeling the environment,' which frames embodied knowledge of geography and place through a holistic inclusion of sense perceptions. Paterson draws on other ethnographers as precedents who perform ethnographies of somatic sensations as qualitative research. Movement while thinking, feeling, and by extension, knowing, allows us to draw connections with the environment and to our body, people, plants, and water. For scholar Juanita Sundberg, walking is a decolonial tool, *to act*, beyond sensory perception. In "Decolonizing Posthumanist Knowledge," based in Zapatista practices of "walking the world into being:"

> Walking is identified as an important practice in the performative coproduction of knowledge and space. We make our world in the

16

> process of moving through and knowing it. As research in Indigenous
> American communities illustrates, trails, paths, and tracks mark and
> bring into being important cognitive connections and social interactions.
> Moreover, as David Turnbull points out, trail walking is intertwined with
> storytelling, narratives that call forth and enact connections between people,
> place, and practices in time and space. (39)

This performance is also to enact a "pluriverse", "a world in which many worlds fit[5]"

a multiplicity of knowledges and histories recognized *in*-movement, by drawing

connections between unfixed elements, "through a dialogic politics of walking and

talking, doing and reflecting…as we humans move, work, play, and narrate with a

multiplicity of beings in place, we enact historically contingent and radically distinct

worlds/ontologies" (Sundberg, 39). Methods of 'feeling the land,' then, are a

crossover between walking, decolonization, and *feeling* histories. If walking is a form

of embodied knowledge, and the land is an archive of its histories and affects, then

"walking the world into being" is a form of accessing the pre-colonial mind, and an

alternative embodied historical knowledge. Drawing on Sundberg's writings and on

this new model that Paterson calls "haptic geographies" (based in 'haptic

knowledge'), I want to propose a turn to the somatic and affective in the landscape as

the basis for a renewed understanding of site and its analysis. I propose to investigate

the representation of the landscape's histories through haptic modes of engagement,

and to engage the senses in documentation, while pointing to the impossibility of

fully making these present in the gallery. The crossing of these frameworks leads me

to what I am calling 'haptic history', a mode of analysis and representation that would

engage these methods in an engagement with sites, and produce representations that

would always be partial records of the landscape and of this embodied, performative

experience of "walking the world into being". The framework of my project, then,

reflects an approach to site engagement that can be summarized in two main points:

---

[5] A conception Sundberg borrows from post-colonial theorist Walter Mignolo. See "On Pluriversality,"
and Introduction in "Local Histories, Global Designs"

1) a re-engagement with the fragmented, archived, contingent and ephemeral histories of the sites, and a re-linking of these to siting processes; and (2) the adoption of "haptic geographies," 'haptic knowledge' and Indigenous methodology as renewed modality of site analysis through artistic practice.

1.5.   Research Questions

1. What might a conjunction of contemporary artistic practice with the methods of haptic geography, do for our understanding of site?

2. What would it mean for architectural 'siting' practices to include temporal, ephemeral, meteorological, and affective phenomena, as well as a reflective practice of embodied experience?

1.6.   Indigenous Ways of Knowing

In addition to Paterson's notion of haptic geographies and haptic knowledges, this project also seeks to engage with Indigenous methodology as a site for rethinking siting and the landscape, particularly through Vanessa Watts notion of "place-thought" (Watts), Zoe Todd's "Indigenizing the Anthropocene," and Robin Wall Kimmerer's "Braiding Sweetgrass." While Burns begins to acknowledge the colonial underpinnings of siting within architecture practices, she focuses on the omission of the poetic and ephemeral. However, in this paper and thesis project, I argue that Indigenous methodology transcends the poetic to the socio-political dimensions of place.

In her essay, "Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency Among Humans and Non-Humans," Vanessa Watts iterates how Indigenous ontology and cosmology assert the connection of all living beings to one another. Land, animal, vegetal and human life are interconnected, as all contain spirits. In her notion of "Place-Thought," Watts dismantles the Western hierarchy that places humans at the center, arguing that the land itself is an active, living and thinking agent, and the *source* (rather than the object) of human and non-human agency (Watts, 21). The intertwining of place and thought Watts identifies in Indigenous ontology poses a strong challenge to the Western epistemological-ontological divide. In its understanding of the land as alive and thinking, it also relates to a rising popularity in discourse on the Anthropocene. In her essay, "Indigenizing the Anthropocene," Zoe Todd is critical of the term ('Anthropocene'), which she sees as still privileging human life in a hierarchy between species. As Watts describes it, even in posthuman and anthropocene discourses, "Dirt is acknowledged as an actant at best, no longer an afterthought but still limited with regard to ability. How does dirt affect me? How do I affect dirt?

These are questions that underscore the agency which is limited to a human-centric quandary (29)." Against this, Indigenous ontology re-imagines the potential of all living elements and their extensions to each other through stories of creation and spirituality. These particular cosmologies and origin stories are Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee. First, that of Skywoman: "When Skywoman falls from the sky and lies on the back of a turtle, she is not only able to create land but becomes territory itself. Therefore, Place-Thought is an extension of her circumstance, desire, and communication with the water and animals - her agency." If all living things contain spirit, and Skywoman is the land, this establishes a relationship to the land that is deeply spiritual and respectful. Indigenous ways of knowing, predicated on an ethos of mutual respect with the land, may be seen as akin to love between humans: ecologist and Indigenous scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer asks in Braiding Sweetgrass: "What do you suppose would happen if people believed this crazy notion that the land loved them back? [...] When you feel the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond […] Something essential happens in a vegetable garden. It's a place where if you can't say "I love you" out loud, you can say it in seeds. And the land will reciprocate, in beans (127)." The mutual relationship and exchange between species and the land moves beyond mere actants and binary relationships, giving the earth as much agency as any other living organism. Furthermore, if each is given its due importance, there is potential communication between trees, and seeds, at different moments in their growth. By extension of these values, Indigenous practices, ceremonial, treaties, and relationship to the land are methodologies that subvert Western modes of mistreating the land through concepts of ownership: "So under Indigenous law it is not possible to sell any part of Grandmother Earth, because we have a sacred relationship to her. You are a

part of that. (Fred Kelly qtd in Watts, p. 26)." This is explained further in Watts' description of an "ethic of historical consciousness":

> This ethic holds that the past occurs simultaneously in the present and influences how we conceptualize the future. It requires that we see ourselves related to, and implicated in, the lives of those yet to come. It is an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people similarly are tied together (250).

Furthermore, Watts reminds us of the importance of considering these origin stories and events in Indigenous history as having taken place, not as myths to be abstracted by Western theorists. Importantly, through colonization of knowledge and culture, when Indigenous people are made to see their origin story as myth, it becomes suppressed or forgotten with time and severs their connection to their ontology. This is exemplified very beautifully in the following quote by Watts concerning Indigenous methodology which counters colonization: "Even amongst ourselves it can be easy to forget…so its not a question of accessing something which has already come and gone, but simply to listen, to act (13)." As Kimmerer poetically describes in Braiding Sweetgrass: "Breathe in its scent (of the sweetgrass) and you start to remember things you didn't know you'd forgotten (5). The plants tell us her story, we need to learn to listen (10)." In my research, these Indigenous values and ontologies have been significant in expanding my understanding of what it means to cultivate land, and what it means to dwell, particularly as a diasporic person. Watts' notion of "place-thought" as a kind of pre-cognitive knowledge of the land, felt in the body, as a primary site of knowledge through performative engagement with the sites, has been particularly important here. My video piece *CIRiver*, serves as a filmic documentation of an event: my experiencing the physical attributes of the site through an embodied and mobile encounter, which is also a response to the histories embedded in the land.

1.7.   Site Specificity and Performative Practices

Inaugural land artists of the 60s, Robert Smithson, Richard Long, and Nancy Holt set the stage for works that move beyond the confines of the gallery space to the environment, and site-specific interventions, often invested in institutional specificity and critique. James Meyer, Lucy Lippard, and Miwon Kwon's discursive writing on site and architecture in dialogue with architectural critic Kenneth Frampton[6]'s seminal work "Towards a Critical Regionalism," on locality, topography, archeological and historical specificity of a site within post-modern discourse. Site, non-site, place, non-place, and a notion of "building the site" are among thematic conceptions within art and architecture theory and practice of the seventies and eighties.

In his essay "The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity", James Meyer reflects: "[the functional site] is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual foliations and the bodies that move between them. An informational site, a palimpsest of texts, photographs, and video recordings. The functional work refuses the intransigence of literal site specificity. (25)" Smithson's annotations and documentation of his earthwork Spiral Jetty, and the maps by the Situationists alike are examples of "a functional site," acting as surrogates, referencing the site, but not bound up or limited by it. As a conceptual map, Smithson's drawings create spatial and representational parallels between an environmental effect of the site and his embodied relationship to the site. Acting as maps or residual, fragmented 'quotations' of the sites, Smithson often works with ephemeral environmental effects (as with Spiral Jetty).

---

[6] See: Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards A Critical Regionalism: Six Points for An Architecture of Resistance." *The Anti-aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. New York, NY: New, 1998. 17-34. Print.

As Miwon Kwon notes, "The guarantee of a specific relationship between an artwork and its "site" is not based on a physical permanence of that relationship, but rather on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation (Kwon, 43)." Smithson and Long 's practices are embedded within an art historical context and specificity that moves toward immateriality, to conceptual, minimal and performative gestures. Meyer asserts: "Place could not be purely experienced (like the literal site of minimalism or Richard Serra), but was itself a social and discursive entity" (Meyer, 29). Richard Serra's work relies on literal site specificity, as phenomenological essence, while works like Long's and Smithson's on 'allegorical' functional and representational versions. While not acting as complete or essential representations, these works still depend on the site and are intertwined in intimate processes of looking, listening, annotating, mapping, and reflecting as methodology. Long's work, in my view, embodies a phenomenological and strived 'purity' between his body, and mark making on the land as a minimal representation of a performative gesture. It relies on Long's body's ideal interaction (a one to one relationship) with the earth. Going 'nowhere' being a 'no-place, or 'non-site,' circumvents the complexities of context specificity, and places Long's body at the centre of his inquiry. Similar to the phenomenology and site specificity in architectural practice, the creation of 'sense of place' or 'locus' is largely crafted by the artist/architect, centering his or her position as ultimate agent, as opposed to the land or other people and their histories. Lippard asserts: "we need to conserve traditional cultures in part because of 'the fresh new questions they pose about the relation of people to each other and to the land'. The politics of place is layered with emotional and aesthetic resonance that is hard to analyse" (Lippard, 155). Further, once violently re-presented in the gallery space, these art pieces are something similar to the perfected modernist buildings, serving its own conceptual

purpose and the artist's. The works rely on the site perceived as 'natural' and 'untouched' rather than socially relational with layers of complexity, and the sites themselves as political agents socially and culturally intertwined. In contrast, artists like Gordon Matta-Clark engage in fieldwork, intervening in complex contexts to respond in socially and politically engaged ways requiring attention to the communities that occupy and have moved through these places. Lucy Lippard urges the artist to take responsibility of a tensional positionality: "Art that illuminates its location rather than just occupying it is place-specific, rather than site-specific, incorporating people and economic and historical forces as well as topography. To expose the social agendas that formed the land, to reinstate the mythical and cultural dimensions of 'public' experience, and at the same time, to become conscious of the ideological relationships and historical constructions of place." (Lippard, 114) Miwon Kwon and Hal Foster echo a similar critical standpoint on the topic:

> "Certainly site-specific art can lead to the unearthing of repressed histories, provide support for greater visibility of marginalized groups and issues, and initiate the re(dis)covery of 'minor' places so far ignored by dominant culture. But in as much as the current socio-economic order thrives on the (artificial) production and (mass) consumption of difference (for difference's sake), the siting of art in 'real' places can also be a means to extract the social and historical dimensions out of places to variously serve the thematic drive of an artist, satisfy institutional demographic profiles, or fulfil the fiscal needs of the city" (Kwon, 55).

The ethnographic turn, and artists in the 90s and today make connections not only between artist and land, but attend to subjectivities, contingencies, histories, and narratives both historicized and repressed that weave together the artist's position with the land, other people, and animals, of both past and future. Today, many artists – including Rebecca Belmore and Meritt Johnson – do precisely this, by addressing (and transcending) land politics from an Indigenous perspective. Rebecca Belmore's sculptural piece, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to their Mother*, 1991, responds to the OKA crisis of 1990, when Mohawk people were protecting their land

from dispossession, and transformation into a Golf Course. The piece is a large megaphone, which she traveled with around Canadian landscapes, where land claims have been made to speak to the land directly, as Anishinaabe and Indigenous ontology tell us, is mother earth. This performative sculpture not only acknowledges Belmore's political position in the context of Indigenous rights and people's relationship to the land, but also does so in a poetic, performative way, engaging Indigenous cosmology, and urgency of land politics. With a similar mission, artist Merritt Johnson, on a residency in Santa Fe (2014) creates a performative instructional piece in collaboration with curator Cannupa Hanska Luger titled, "How to shake hands with water." In a tongue and cheek way, it addresses the often overlooked and taken for granted relationship we have with water. As she washes her hands to "create positive relationships with water, like a handshake" her hands become clean but the water is left dirty. As she concludes, water does not really need us at all, but we depend on water. This brings the relationship we have to nature, water and the land, as one where we tend to give ourselves power to govern over the land, while in reality, it is the land that governs us.[7]

---

[7] Johnson, Merritt and Luger, Cannupa Hanska. "How to Shake Hands With Water." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2016.

LAND

2. *Defining Landscape*

Onsite Review's 2015 publication *"On Land"* frames a discussion around landscapes, particularly those in the process of being conceptualized and awaiting permissions. Nora Wendl opens her discussion of a future design proposal for the site of the notorious mid-20th century Pruitt-Igoe complex with a quote from Tim Ingold: "Let me begin by explaining what the landscape is not. It is not 'land', it is not 'nature' and it is not 'space'." This "simple sentence," Wendl continues, "acknowledges that landscapes do not abstractly contain the records of the deliberate interventions and events that transpire upon them – they *are* the record" (Wendl, 4). This idea runs throughout Ingold's own text, "The Temporality of the Landscape," which draws links between practices of archeology and anthropology, land and cultivation, taking the view – anchored in the context of phenomenology – that the land is an archive in its right and contains meaning embedded in its layers.[8] Furthermore, Ingold suggests that the exchange between body and land is intertwined and temporal: "the practice of archeology is itself a form of dwelling"(189). Just as a structure might gather the landscape around it, the present *gathers* temporality: "The present is not marked off from a past that it has replaced or a future that will, in turn, replace it; it rather gathers the past and future onto itself"(196). I posit the sites that I engage with in this body of work as likewise in a process of gathering temporality, and *becoming*: the land is continuously re-making itself, gathering the past, and propelling into a sense of futurity, while also accumulating and being itself the record of that accumulation, accruing and being transmitted over time. Attempting via my

---

[8] Ingold, Tim. "The Temporality of the Landscape." *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling & Skill*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

practice to navigate the crossing of landscape, history and temporality, I ask: what does an attention to the temporal, ephemeral, and tactile do to an understanding of siting? How might one present – or represent – a site in a way that retains the tensional disjuncture felt in the encounter with the site itself, whose information is never fully disclosed, remaining hidden or at a distance?

The Streetsville site, both today and historically, hovers on the verge of change, its specificities threatened with clearance and suppression. How might we approach, or analyze, this site, in order to re-engage with the traces (the passage of water, people, feelings, experiences, histories) which are not fully registrable in typical architectural representation, while not falling into the illusion once more of complete knowledge or ownership over the site? And what kind of practice might be appropriate to the archive that is the land?

One of the key elements of this project concerns the impending threat of erasure with relation to the cleared site. This threat brings with it what Melissa Seigworth terms the "yet-ness" of a "potential affective threat," felt before something is about to happen, when forces of possibility accumulate in the space of a site in transition. In the Streetsville location, the site's potential of becoming a retail plaza throughout the decision-making process perpetuates an affective threat. In my work on this site, siting strategies are extended to include the intangibility of affect that accumulates in a site: approaching the land with openness to its affective layers, embedded in history and in the land itself, might pose a challenge to the dominant understanding of site as "cleared" or as a passive, empty locale for development.

Many landscape architects today are seeking to revisit and reverse the tendency in design to 'flatten' the land, both physically and politically.[9] Burns, who likewise identifies this 'flattening,' further deconstructs both the aesthetic and

---

[9] As in Corner, James. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture.* New York: Princeton Architectural, 1999. Print.

mathematical notions of the landscape in her 1991 essay "On site."[10] Such

approaches, these authors assert, engender a view of the land, distant, objectified, and

abstract. Burns writes: "To rationalize land, is to objectify it profoundly" (1991, 150).

Even the Western lens of the term "landscape" implies a Romanticized perspective

(as in landscape painting), and more directly relates to quantifying land with

measurement, property lines, boundaries and so forth. A rationalization of the land

becomes the form by which we conduct activity as well as locate ourselves in space.

In the Toronto Township (before becoming Mississauga in 1968), the

division of property into 200 square acres through plots and concessions with the

arrival of the colonial settlers organized the land through processes of ownership and

monetary exchange. Plotting and organizing land into the Cartesian grid is inherent in

the definition of the "landscape"—"the portion of land that the eye can comprehend

in one single view" (Burns 160, 1991). This perspective limits metaphysical and

qualitative values in favour of a contained image. Sletto adds to this definition of

landscape by an intersection of mapping with Indigenous histories: "Cartography by

its very nature always produces tightly structured striated space. By embedding

Indigenous spatialities in a Cartesian grid, maps must inevitably cause the erasure of

intensively lived 'thick places' that are filled with affective resonance but which

ultimately escape the representational project (926)." Thus, even de-colonial

cartography is still limiting, to the extent to which the mapped comes to stand in for

and erase the richness of the land itself, and its *cultivation*. In "CIRiver," the plot

drawing indicates the boundary of the CIR relative to development. The British

Crown sold the land to settlers, gradually displacing Anishinaabe people from the

river they consider a source of cultivation, survival, and dwelling – and which

---

[10] Burns, Carol. "On Site." *Drawing/building/text: Essays in Architectural Theory*. Ed. Andrea
        Kahn. New York: Princeton Architectural, 1991. 147-67. Print.

organically binds all of their Mississauga territory. Susan Buggey writes about the essential intersection of the land with spirituality and cosmology:

> Aboriginal cosmologies relate earth and sky, the elements, the directions, the seasons and mythic transformers to lands that they have occupied since ancient times. Guided by these cosmological relationships, many have creation stories related to their homelands … Many consider all the earth to be sacred and regard themselves as an integral part of this holistic and living landscape. They belong to the land and are at one in it with animals, plants, and ancestors whose spirits inhabit it (2).

The Anishinaabe people, have always relied on the Credit River for hunting and fishing; cultivating the land, and dwelling through nomadic lifestyles. In an echo of Watts' "Place-Thought," the leader of Anishinaabes of Mississauga/ Toronto Township believed that a Spirit lived among the shores of the Credit River, where the QEW now intersects with the river (Skeoch, 38). The Anishinaabe of Credit River's assimilation in the early 1800s into Western values of ownership, farming, and settlement, which their leader advocated as a means to survive settler colonialism (Skeoch, 43), was highly detrimental to their way of life, precisely because of their relationship to this land. The Anishinaabe people were gradually pushed out of their land along the Credit River and now live in Six Nations Reserve in Haggersville, as the "New Credit."

My pieces work within the notion of tactile geographies by involving somatic experience and what Paterson calls "touchy-feely" methods of learning-by-doing, which are grounded in the field of humanistic geography. To offer counter-methods of siting practices, I propose a "haptic histo-geography" which re-connects to the proximal, material and tactile specificities of the site, moving in my installation between the distal (aerial views) and proximal (sonic, temporal, tactile), as tactics of revealing, and pulling back, to create a contrast between the two affective modalities. The peri-urban fabric, as it stands, amalgamates modern-inspired buildings, Indigenous land, and all the histories in between. Both should be acknowledged as

gatherers of affect, activity, and narrative. The next section is an elaboration of siting;

place-site-place and the cleared and constructed site.

SITING

3.1 *Place-site-place*

In *Site Matters*, edited by Carol Burns, Robert A. Beauregard maps a designer, planner, or real estate agent's role in shifting the land's status, in his words, "from place to site and back to place"(43). Beauregard also critiques the notion of a "sense of place", which is ultimately used as colonizing force that further suppresses the land. In this process, a precursor to designing, the land is a place with inherent narratives and socially constructed meanings. Thus, a form of erasure has to take place before the architect can conceptualize the site. This blank slate allows for artistic freedom and conceptual clarity, which emphasizes the building over the complexity of site and context. Place then *becomes* site – land that has a boundary or measurement, that can be defined mathematically – for the project to have a defined border outlining its physical and practical limitations. Following this, according to Beauregard, there is a "sense of place" imposed on the site, perhaps for developers to make it more attractive as a commodity, wherein it becomes a socially construed notion of a meaning of the place for marketability (Beauregard, 45).

3.2   The Cleared and Constructed Site

This oscillation – place-site-place – overlaps with Burns' concept of the cleared and constructed site. Insightfully, she notes that no site is uncharged with meaning, even if it has been 'untouched'. Each has its existing social and political implications; therefore, no site *as it stands* is neutral (Burns, 1991, 150). Rather, neutrality is designed to create an illusion of control and singular vision for the site. Her notion of the cleared site is often with relation to undeveloped land. The designer

33

assumes that because there is no human construction, that site is then void of meaning: "Natural constructions are considered secondary to human constructions" (Burns 150). On the other hand, the constructed site is a design methodology, taking as its basis the landscape's physical attributes and incorporating these within the building's design. In this mode, an architect takes up and physically represents in a building design the surrounding materialities of adjacent buildings, or some aspect of the landscape – here elevated to a central theme or leitmotif. Frank Lloyd Wright's *FallingWater,* for example, echoes in its physical and tectonic representation the waterfall already present on the site, using this as the basis to create a sculptural form that responds (formally) to the existing site, while arguably creating more of an art object rather than a structure that embodies an experience of space. While works like this are often deemed poetic in its command of form, in separating out one permanent feature of site they may potentially negate the ephemeral, invisible and changing aspects of the land. As, in this process, one narrative, one aspect of landscape – owing to the decisions made by designers – is privileged over others. With time the site *becomes* an embodiment of that story, potentially suppressing and quieting others: an imposed and violent form of erasure of the land to create an ideal site context (a practice that paradoxically can be multiplied across sites).

My use of the term "dormant" (slowed down, in a deep sleep) to describe these peri-urban landscapes expresses the likelihood that a landscape might appear derelict, and thus unimportant to developers, planners, and designers – or, alternately, sitting empty and ripe for development. Returning to the assertion that no site is neutral, any design affecting the future urban fabric, we need to consider the macro scale of sites in relation to the micro. This relationship far exceeds the boundary/plot lines, to consider affects that relate to multiple narratives and to foreground the impermanent and fleeting in artistic and siting practice. My installation uses

mechanisms of display, from sculptural objects, to images to video and sound, to project the ethereal and immaterial images and "faux" documentation of vegetation from an amateur's perspective. What are the tensions between preservation and impermanence, and how can they be articulated through the mechanisms of display? In other words, how might different modes of displaying processes of site analysis and histories *in process*, make explicit the tensions between impermanent, phenomena, and the preservation of these? The next section explores notions of impermanence, erasure and the preservation of land and building, in relation to what might be termed an "archival impulse."

ARCHIVE

4.1   *Archival Impulse*

In his *Critique of Archival Reason*, Henk Slager outlines artistic methodologies of the archive based on Hal Foster's *An Archival Impulse*, and the artist's desire to create meaning with found archives while embracing contingency, confusion and seeking non-hierarchical formats in exhibitions (77). "The archive has a set of meanings—a "form" that changes with the mental frame that was brought to it: "the great confused murmur" that emanates from the discursive formation"(75). Following this, I see the archive as *active*, having its previous autonomies while responding to its new context; it adopts a new aura while maintaining its previous networks. Our body's capacity to affect and be affected by landscape or site resounds back on the site itself, and creates an *accumulation* onto the land. That land is an archive to be read, and used as metaphysical 'data' in my alternative site strategy.

My own approach to the landscape, and the archive (as well as the land *as* archive) emphasizes processual activity, and what theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Roland Barthes have termed "becoming." While a full discussion of this concept is beyond the scope of this thesis, it might suffice here to quote Barthes: "A tree is a new thing at every instant: we affirm the form because we do not seize the subtlety of an absolute moment. We are not subtle enough to perceive that probably absolute flow of becoming: the permanent exists only thanks to our coarse organs which reduce and lead things to shared premises of vulgarity, whereas nothing exists in this form..." (79) To adopt a perspective of becoming, according to Barthes, is to view the land as *active* and *in-process*: recoding over record, archiving over archive, or dwelling, cultivation and siting over site: "nothing is really antagonistic, everything is

plural"(79). This idea echoes James Corner's assertion of the term "landscape" as "process or activity." In my piece "Dormant Streetsville," which utilizes the embedding of plants into plaster, I emphasize the land and its siting as a process, preserving ephemeral objects from site in a semi-permanent repository. By transposing them into the gallery, they become 'petrified' taken out of their context and halting their process of becoming. I also contrast them with black, reflexive plexi-glass, as a clean and pristine 'Miesian' material, independent from natural or temporal processes. In response to critiques of the plinth, as a mode of placing the art/architectural object as a separate and elevated object of contemplation, I sought to use the plexi-glass as a sort of "plinth" that would be laid on the ground, and affected by the crude material of the plaster, and plants, breaking apart, and leaving residues. In this sense the plexi pieces are serving multiple conceptual functions; first, in dialogue with the notion of the plinth, and secondly, as a play on the frame or box of the museological vitrine breaking apart and lastly as a clean pristine material laid on the unkempt ground.

In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida describes the *mal d'archive* – or desire to return –without which there would be no impulse to record (Derrida, 91). In the case of the landscape, without the impending threat of disappearance in sites in transition, there would be no impulse to record and categorize histories of the land. But Derrida also correctly notes the violence inherent in the archive. In relation to *Archive Fever*, Slager asserts that, "in addition to the affirmative, gathering, preserving dimension of the archive, there is the violence of the archive itself, as archive, as archival violence" (76). How can one record or preserve the land, under threat of erasure, without further subjecting it to a violence of representation, omission, objectification and reduction? For me, this possibility materializes in a foregrounding of particular narratives and suppressed histories in marginal and transitory sites, and in works that point to the

existence of landscape and buildings alike *as* an archive. Tactile modes of engagement, partially registered in the artistic works on display here, contrast the distanced perspective of mapping and site analysis through the sonic and haptic, while also resisting the claims to comprehension of the representational archive.

In the framing of my exhibition, I have attempted to keep open this awareness of the violence of archiving, acknowledging and privileging this violence as part of an ongoing dialogue with these sites and with mechanisms of display. My installation is at Whippersnapper Gallery, a 13ft by 13ft boxy space with a display window overlooking Dundas Street. There is an opportunity for the window to act as an interface for display between the audience passing by and the installation in the gallery, and to use the frame as another tactic of proximal vs. distal. Furthermore, these tactics are explored within each of the pieces in the installation, by creating tensions between projection and drawing, using materials of preservation as modes of distancing, and filming the "tall tower" site at a distance, as other elements of the urban fabric intercede. While registering the sites themselves as archives, my work also speaks to what Derrida terms the *anarchival* impulse: "the *possibility* of a radical perversion, indeed a diabolical death drive, an aggression or a destruction drive: a drive of loss"(9). In my work, I try to maintain both sides of this tension, siting and archiving the un-registerable qualities which escape both siting *and* the archive. There is a pull or draw toward the secrets of the land, a kind of alluring curiosity. In the process of building and by different modes of mapping/diagramming sites, there is tension between annotation/ mapping and erasure: a movement *towards* the intangible and ephemeral moments, yet these elements are always just out of reach.

I explore that affective movement and oscillation in an earlier work entitled *Moments of Passage and Dwelling*: in this work, I philosophize about the frame of the image and the frame of the camera in relation to the representation of affect, the

visceral and ephemeral in sites of my previous dwelling – a found photograph depicting a suburban backyard with figures, a motel in Mississauga. With the piece, I want the viewer to consider the affect that escapes the frame, which I represent by the way the work is installed in the space; several reprinted copies of the photograph are juxtaposed with a video projection that also includes this same photograph. Working with my own gaze, that of the photographer, and that of the presumed audience for this work, I additionally layer the work with a soundtrack that implies a possible narrative associated with the photograph, but which easily escapes the structure of framing; the sonic is a representation of affect 'leaking' between the fixed frames. The piece is a representation of my search for affect, and a struggle to 'frame' the feeling and aura around the photograph. Within this piece I work with the concept my gaze as a passer-by (of the motel) and as a dweller (of the suburban backyard) both through habitation over time. There is an oscillation between affects; a feeling of nostalgia for the place and event depicted in the photograph, and estrangement. The work replicates the work of the construction of memory and narrative in and through the marginal/transitory spaces of habitation, where both passerby and dweller work with fragmentary understanding.

The partial archive I have constructed here, seeks to illuminate the land itself as the true archive, unrepresentable as such because it is always in a process of *becoming*: "Landscape as noun (object or scene) is quieted in order to emphasize landscape as verb, as process or activity" (Corner, 4). This marks a shift from a contained delineation of siting, toward a process-oriented design practice that attempts to recover the landscape as agent and collaborator in design. The land *in process* highlights the cyclical relationships of growth and death in agriculture, flowering and withering as aspects of siting.

In my installation, I engage with an open-ended process and exchange between material and weathering, dormant and blooming; the process allows time to affect the building material. Furthermore, I consider the Tall Towers and buildings themselves as an archive. They evidence time passing, and resonate affect gathered around the site and the surrounding building materials with relation to the landscape. In "CIRiver," moving through and around the Tall Towers, and filming their relationship to surrounding geography, I place personal and broader histories into relation, as a spatial narrative, mapped onto the landscape. The film emphasizes past and present histories as well as fleeting (undocumented) narratives, movement and the haptic through a sonic installation. I seek to create a relationship between how we move through the physical sites, and their historical, and ephemeral layers. This section highlights the relationship between "becoming" and siting practices, to connect back to notions of the land (and building) *as* archive, and to siting practices as forms of erasure of the land/archive that make building possible. In the following section, "art practice," I discuss the pieces in detail relating the two sites to a "spatial archive," impermanence, siting and affect.

ART PRACTICE

5.1   *The making of a meta-methodology*

I see section two, "original content", as separated into two, interrelated parts. The first is the making of a meta-methodology: a process and alternative to traditional architectural site strategies. The meta-methodology crosses between tactile, visceral, and embodied experience and the historical dimension of site. Part theoretical inquiry, part reflexive artistic practice, my approach intends to display processes of surveying, mapping, sampling, preserving, annotating, and documenting, for the viewer to engage critically with the mechanisms of display in the exhibition, and the material tensions between the objects as archive, and that in the work which resists a full disclosure or claim to completeness of description. I chose two sites in Mississauga to apply my meta-methodology, each bringing different results and sets of questions to the project. The first is at the south edge of Streetsville, and the second is located adjacent to the entrance of the QEW. The former focuses on temporality, phenomenology and weathering in conjunction with the site's history as a former farmland before its erasure into a retail plaza. The latter is constructed on 'invisible' colonial narratives, and offers a shifting perspective of the landscape through field recording of the Credit River a sonic reference point around which the body orients itself in space.

The site of the Tall Tower can be characterized as odd, 'left-over' space, while both sites act as thresholds between places and as examples of shifting and expanding built environments. Often, my engagement with site begins with peripatetic walking or Sunday driving; in this, I am indebted to the Situationists' notion of psychogeography, as "the study of the precise law and specific effects of the

geographical environment consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviours of individuals"(Debord, Situationist International Online). Like them, I embark on intentional but aimless wandering (what Debord termed the 'dérive'), "walking to explore the impact of urbanization; disrupts the habitual ways in which individuals normally experience environments" (Debord, Situationist International Online). And, as with the psychogeographic 'maps' constructed by the Situationists after their experiments, my own artworks do not contain the affective experience that I had on the site, but rather serve as reminders and residues, ciphers of this experience. Forms of urbanization such as suburban development, private properties, and modernization affect navigation around the site. Through performative ethnographic walking, a "walking into being" and walking as a form of knowledge, the impact of these forms and boundaries accumulated over time become present to me. Performing this allows for relationships between elements of urbanism, past and present histories to come together. I reflect on how the body is forced to navigate around the built forms, hiding prominent facets of the landscape, and deeper embedded histories. The urban planning separates the public from access to the Credit River, from the CIR boundary. I walked to record, and perform the 1 mile walk between the boundary line and the River across Indigenous land but ultimately failed because the connection is disrupted by roads and private property. As you see in the video, the land and sites of trauma are only accessible through backyards, leaving mounds of land as evidence of having been shifted around.

5.2. "Dormant (Streetsville)"

I engage in peripatetic walking and photography to reflect the Streetsville site's physical attributes and consider its vegetation and topography. With my meta-

methodology as a broad frame, the temporality and ephemeral layers of the site become a driving conceptual force in the work. The temporality of sites is not often considered an element among planners: as the phenomenologist Juhani Pallasmaa writes, "Abstraction and perfection transport us into the world of ideas, whereas matter, weathering and decay strengthen the experience of time, causality and reality….The architecture of the modern era aspires to evoke an air of ageless youth and of a perpetual present" (Pallasmaa qtd in Redfield 189). In contrast, architects like Pallasmaa and Peter Zumthor design buildings with a heightened sensitivity to material tactility and the haptic. In his designs, Zumthor specifically draws from his memories of how architecture *feels*: he describes how a doorknob felt in spaces of his childhood, considers the coolness or warmth of the material, recalls how this particular doorknob led to a garden acting as a threshold between inside and outside, how the place smelled of particular cooking, and the sunlight at a particular time of day/season (Zumthor, 9-10). In his design of Thermal Baths, both water and stone are the haptic phenomenological material he uses to evoke – as traces in his drawings express – the weight and materiality of the stone in his design, as well as echoing the sound of the water, heightening these haptic effects. In my project, alongside various methodologies of 'haptic history' I pay particular attention to the materialities and sensibility of the site, and a kind of sensation, and narrative from which to bring forth and evoke. Such that these choices are loosely tied to the poetics of the site; for instance the choice to cast in plaster, is to refer to a 'hidden' private interior space around the site, which works with other elements as extensions to an affective experience of the site.

5.3   Archival Storage and Preservation

A false sense of preservation is at play: the archive is fragile and impermanent, and always a representation of material that can never be fully recovered. The manner in which an archive is placed together is always contingent, complex and becoming. Broadly, the pieces in my thesis exhibition consider, and embody, impermanence: both as records of my own singular engagements with site, and with the fragile and ephemeral elements of which they are composed. Time here is both continuous and beyond our control. Recalling Tim Ingold's assertion that land *is* archive *is* recollection, here recollection materializes in the land's ridges, evidencing its history of farming, and the site's undocumented past activities, all of which I can only indicate in partial and incomplete ways in the works on display.

The Streetsville site is connected to a history of farming and labour of new immigrants who often worked in mills and farms upon arrival to Canada. The history of the Streetsville site as a (wheat) farm is still physically evident on the site's topography. Power relationships are still present between the immigrant as "outsider" or "unwelcome" in the current cultural climate. There is a long history around the labor of new immigrants, wherein in the late 1800, early 1900, it was a struggle as they were laborers but often could not afford to buy land. That story is a part of Streetsville's history of farming and Canada's narrative of immigration more broadly (PAMA, "Removing Barriers, Why did people keep coming to Canada and to Peel?, 2016). With redevelopment processes underway, these distant histories would be further kept distant, as a tactile and physical history. There is a tension between the projected and anticipated future of the site's clearing and erasure, a play between suspension, memory and "profound objectification" (Burns, 150). Its erasure will

literally and metaphorical constitute a flattening of the land. I sought in my work to preserve something of the poetics of the temporal, cyclical and seasonal as well as the somatic warmth of shelter (in the residences surrounding the site) versus the cold, wet winter months. Dormant plants dominate the visual landscape during the long winter seasons, and yet are on the verge of blooming. The land might appear derelict, and yet there is multiplicity and intricacy observable in the site's vegetation.

To explore archival and storage methods, I deploy two modes of artistic representation. The first is a hybrid between the anthropological children's workbook and scrapbook (examples seen at PAMA), and annotation based on artistic text and image works and peripatetic walking annotations such as David Birchall's *Sound Drawing*. I use gridded paper to create pencil drawings/studies of the plants, providing a sense of intimacy, and thusly document vegetation in a mechanical form. Using the material of storage preservation of prints, I decided to create an archive of drawings and annotations of this vegetation. This process creates a tension between the material archive and its projection, the immaterial and the ethereal (a projection of an anticipated future). The vegetation will no longer be a part of the site's tactility; there is erasure. Its projection is a representation of its trace, and history. The pieces thus seek to incorporate a metaphysical, affective tension of a particular presence and sensibility of the site, without claiming to fully represent it (as in typical modes of site depiction/description).

With a similar aesthetic, I created a microfiche, viewable through a lomokino film viewer, with prints of the site's (future) history as farmland. as farmland. Again the tactile geography is embedded and embodied in the ridges and lines of topography. The microfiche is the medium/interface (represented here by the lomokino viewer) between the viewer and historical material when visiting the archive, which I use here as a distancing tactic. Closeness (the tactile and haptic) is

represented by flowers, ridges, earth, and then mediated by filters, screens, and interfaces, which push back again. The microfiche is a standard preservation method to view old and delicate documents, for reasons of preservation and storability. The physicality and tactility of the microfiche in the material of a filmstrip evoke a sense of temporality, by moving through files and information. Moving through the images in a linear fashion metaphorically parallels that of walking alongside the agricultural ridges of the land, but at the same time asserts its distance from this haptic, embodied experience.

5.4   Framing Dormant Vegetation

The work began with a consideration of the material of building, and plants caught in a frame, to be preserved prior to the erasure of the land for the retail plaza. Selected vegetation (milkweed, Canada thistle, teasel, staghorn sumac) is cast and framed in plaster and placed in the gallery space, trapped between a status as preserved object, and material in a state of ongoing decay.[11] that I plan on replacing back in the sites post defence, as an on-going project. The sculptural pieces engage with the tension in transformation and anticipation by framing and preserving a moment of suspense. I explore the imbalance between preservation and weathering in the processes of siting, foregrounding landscape as a verb by emphasizing its temporal evolution and becoming.

---

[11] As a continuation of this project, I plan to replace these blocks back in the sites from which they were taken, so that they will be further subject to processes of weathering, impermanence and decay.

6.1 The Exhibition

The culminating exhibition will be at Whippersnapper Gallery, a small space (13ft by 13ft) on Dundas Street. I chose this gallery space because it is open to emerging artist projects, and as their mandate expresses interest in experimental projects and exhibitions. Also, the space acts as a threshold and frame between the work and people passing by on the street, as it is a display space which can be seen in its entirety from the sidewalk. It will include "CIRiver" as a sonic and film installation. I will attach transducers to the window in order to project the sonic piece onto the street and inside the gallery. Two smaller works highlight interfaces of preservation and archival processes, by using analog technologies (slide projector) to project, and highlight the tension between tactile film material and ethereal.

The works in the exhibition subsist under two broad frames, with several component pieces in each, both being the result of engagement with the two sites: "Dormant" and "CIRiver". Each work intends to draw the viewer in, in layers, slowly unearthing narratives of the sites. "Dormant," which evokes temporarily sleeping plants which bloom at different times of the year, has a parallel metaphorical meaning of histories of land which are hidden out of view, but still present. In the process of making the work, I engage the tensions between prospecting a new environment with scientific/mechanical models of precision and measurement while equally emphasizing the poetic nature of the plants. Using small-scale pencil hand drawings, I intimately engage with the intricacies and details of the plants while at the same time emphasizing mechanisms of display and preservation, contrasting the pencil/hand-drawn quality with stark materials of glass and the gridded paper, pushing the viewer back, and creating a boundary.

The use of haptic, slightly outmoded technologies requiring the direct tactile intervention of the viewer – slide projector and lomokino viewer – as well as the glass and grid paper drawings, emphasize archival processes, to specifically evoke 'preservation' but also its failure to capture its object, the land that is always in process of becoming. Preservation, here, tries both to counter the erasure of the history of colonized land *and* its further suppression in the processes of documentation. The fact the slide projector and the lomokino viewer necessitate the viewer to act in order to experience the work, reflects the need for active engagement – in the landscape and the gallery – to reveal the hidden elements and activate the archive. These ocular technologies also emphasize the mediation of epistemological and representational approaches that thwart the direct interface between viewer and colonized land, as well as between the researcher, land, and archival material existing in collections such as PAMA. The preciousness given to the archival records at PAMA is seen as more important than the public's engagement with it and requires the viewer's curiosity and probing to peel away the layers to discover. The projected image is close to the ground, near the baseboard, and aligns with the plinth and viewer. That sets up, and hopefully engages, the viewer's body in an entirely different way than the digital video/CIRiver project (which appears near the top of the adjacent wall), while still foregrounding the mechanism of projection that divides or separates the viewer from the projected image. The play between intimacy and distance is highly intentional here. The projected image is at a small, intimate scale, the viewer having to crouch low to the ground to experience it, yet it asserts a distance, being highly mediated both by the preservation mechanism itself (archival slides) and the necessity of pressing the button each time one wants to see another image, to advance the carousel forward. I wanted the projected image to evoke an archive of a since-disappeared land, and thus to make felt the potential for this land's erasure in the near

future. This "projected future" is intentionally conveyed via projection, which is both light/immaterial and tactilely felt.

6.2   **"Dormant, Streetsville"** (Plaster Pieces)

The plaster pieces in "Dormant" expand and extend the premise of the slide projector – except this time through a material/sculptural exploration of surveying, particularly by scientific classification and display of the Streetsville site's vegetation. The Milkweed is represented in drawing and in sculpture in these pieces as its pollen is transported by the wind: a poetic narrative crossing both between the temporality and poetics of movement, and settling in both immigrant and Indigenous narratives. The resulting pieces reflect a conceptual engagement with the museological framing of land and preservation, yet at the beginning stages of a longer process of engaging with representation and documentation as a practice of site analysis. Which would require an on-going processes that dialogue with and take note of the landscape and seasonal changes. At the same time, the pieces reveal the failure in framing the land/vegetation as an affective element in the production of architecture, because here – as in any representation – becoming is lost to archival violence and erasure. What we are left with are inanimate sculptural pieces, in which vegetation becomes petrified on display, and ceases its *becoming*; this attempt to preserve it, in failing, instead emphasizes the impossibility of preservation. The viewer is left with ephemeral and poetic fragments, left over in the casting. When de-rooted, taken out of context and re-displayed, they lose their meanings and affects developed through time and activity on the site itself, as well as the ability these had on site to communicate with other plants. Their placement in the gallery space posed a difficult problem, since I wanted to emphasize their materiality but also that of the black plexi as

another material, of pristine unchanging modernist perfection, and of modular framing, which gradually breaks apart.

The sonic piece, "Enta Omri," explores the nuanced histories and memory of land and experience. The transducers reference a kind of site-specificity to the material/architectural surface, creating a vibration different on the glass window than from the wall surface. I wanted these distinctions to be subtle in their effect, creating layers of sonic moments and spatial/landscape histories in the gallery space. Starting with the window, acting itself as the transmitter of sound/and archival layer, the soft sound of the river can be subtly heard from outside, blending with the sounds of the street. The window becomes a threshold into the work; like the Credit River itself (and its histories), its presence is somewhat hidden, soft and subtle, drowned out by the sounds of the street. From within the gallery space, other sonic layers come in, revealing the intersection and sometimes invasion of other ambient sounds, and highway sounds in a dance between them, as they intersect geographically, and historically as well exemplifying the development of the site over time, and how it is experienced today. To me, this was the ideal form of representation, of layering of these affects, potential unbounded spaces, and histories/narratives created along these sites without restricting them by any physical boundary. They also allude to a moving beyond the limits of the physical site to broader relationships: between the river, to the land adjacent from the tall tower, to the tall towers themselves, and the QEW highway. And, finally, to suburban development all around the site, and to my personal histories of movement in relation to all of these. For the singing to Omo Kalthoum, I wanted the source to be a little more hidden and heard only when sitting in the corner on the bench. In that way, the sound creates a subspace in the gallery, for a more intimate experience, as it would be heard only by the person sitting near to

it with the other transducers heard in the background. They tell a narrative of each sound individually and their overlapping at certain moments.

CIRiver (8 min video installation, looped)

The video and sonic piece complement one another, yet I see each one as a piece that can also stand alone. My process of making videos/films is one of documenting, performing and experiencing, framing and considering the sites and their physical and affective attributes, but without predetermined formal intentions before visiting the site. Instead, these intentions develop both on the site, in the process of filming, and afterwards, in the editing process. Without obvious beginning or end, the video documents my encounter with the site, providing the viewer with a glimpse of that embodied experience and performance, but without presenting itself as a clear/linear sequence. Creating visual relationships between foreground and background, the video also incorporates a recursive intentionality, where an initial visit that saw me perform a walk around the site while filming, then coalesced through this performance and the editing process into a series of recognized intentions; to further develop those frames and climaxes in the finished film, I then returned to the site a second time (to film and visually emphasize the relationships between the landscape and its histories learned by walking in the initial visit.

7.   Concluding Discussion

This project focuses on exploring and developing the notion of what I am terming "haptic histories" as a meta-methodology for siting practice. The theoretical underpinnings of this project draw on a range of critical challenges to typical understandings of site, from Carol Burns' alternative siting practices, to Tim Ingold's attention to temporal and phenomenal attributes of the landscape, Mark Paterson's 'haptic geographies,' and Indigenous epistemologies of land and place. From these frameworks, I consider history and narrative as active and affective material, and as 'data' essential to siting practices that are sensitive to context, land, place, and ontology. Siting practices, in this project, take up my chosen sites as a lens through which to engage with Indigenous histories of place, with the sonic, vegetal, and ephemeral qualities of site, with immigrant histories and the typologies of mid-20th-century urbanism. A Tall Tower collects recent narratives of 'newcomers' passing through, creating an overlap between distant and proximal histories. The narratives are fleeting and liminal. My first research question asks, what might a conjunction of contemporary artistic practice with the methods of haptic geography do for our understanding of site? Through this process, I have come closer to developing a methodology/approach to site that is cross-disciplinary and open to nuances which strengthen artistic practice as the mode by which we conduct research on place and landscape. I wanted to strengthen the idea of an interdependent relationship between history and land as a living archive through haptic geography and indigenous methodologies, and to create an emphasis on history as open and felt, wherein the poetics and history of the site rely on our understanding of their resistance to being academicized, archived or represented. In this light, the only real viable option is a model which allows for an approach to site characterized by openness of structure,

holistic knowledge, and performance. I think that in the future, I could consider "oral histories" as a possible addition to siting practices, opening up the dialogue to include passing narratives, outside formal documentation/archiving practices. The project has brought forward the notion of the building and the land itself as archive, and as an element to be 'preserved.' What are the potential artistic processes of building and historic preservation? What does the paradox between building permanence and the fleeting elements gathered in a site do, for our practices of preservation? Furthermore, how can we, in siting practices, consider the temporality of building meteorology, flowering and withering as parallel yet extending before and after we die? In response to my second research question, the meta-methodology calls for a connection between history and geography to the cyclical nature of both place and affect. Something beyond and primordial, that is felt and known (as asserted both in affect theory and Indigenous methodology), pre-cognitive and pre-conscious, theorizes how these histories are already within us, insofar as they are always already within the landscape, in whose fabric they are too deeply embedded to be erased or forgotten. I began this project with an idea that when buildings are not rooted in their sites, we cannot feel a sense of belonging to the land. However this idea was challenged over the process of producing this thesis and this body of work, when, over time, I came to identify a strong personal significance and meaning in these buildings (whether phenomenologically 'sited' or not) through an embodied engagement with them over time. Even liminal, uncomfortable or 'negative' affects such as anxiety, dislocation, isolation or loneliness still mark the collective imaginary of particular places – affects that are a part of the landscape, and need to be considered when re-appropriating the land for future uses.

The identity of the La Roche site, in particular, has pushed me to recognize my own personal intertwinement with this landscape and its histories. It is through the

meta-methodology outlined here, of an artistic intervention into the typical practices of site analysis to expand these outwards, that any site whatever may be allowed to unfold, and tell me what I need to hear, each with its particular meanings to offer. This project offers a process, and a mode by which to listen to the land, to buildings, and to its ecology/history while practicing patience. The performance of this process opens up to future explorations between performance and documentation, and a further challenge to representation. The works in the exhibition only begin to articulate the tensions between representation and becoming. Indigenous epistemologies tell us there can be no history – no identity, no thinking – without the land; affect theory tells us that histories are felt *before* they are "known". In my work, I seek to bring these together through an embodied and haptic engagement with site, and to archive, albeit in a way that points to the failure of the archive to capture its object, and to what overspills or remains outside its frame: the intangible, immaterial, affective elements of site, always intertwined with the body. The "spatial archive" (at the intersection of history and geography) allows for a highlighting and heightening of narratives and passing moments onto geography, while avoiding the limiting framework of scopic or cartographic substitution for the site itself. The work presented here reflects a commitment to this meta-methodology of "haptic history" as a critical challenge to siting practices, and as a springboard for future projects exploring the intersection of built material, and the ever-becoming, constantly rewritten histories of the land.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. "The Melancholy Angel." *The Man Without Content*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999. 104-115. Print.

Akhavan, Abbas. "Variations on a Garden." Exhibition Catalogue. Toronto, ON.: Mercer Union Gallery; Sept. 2015. Print.

Auge, Marc. *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso, 1995. Print.

Baker, George. "Photography's Expanded Field." *Still Moving Between Cinema and Photography* (2008): 175-88. Print.

Barthes, Roland, and Stephen Heath. "Third Meaning." *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. pp. 52-69. Print.

Beauregard, Robert A. "From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity." Ed. Carol Burns. *Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*. Ed. Andrea Kahn. New York: Routledge, 2005. 39-58. Print.

Belmore, Rebecca. Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama mowan: Speaking to their Mother* (1991*)*. Collection of Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre. jmbgallery.ca. May 9, 2016.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin, 2008. Print.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Bishop, Claire. "Déjà Vu: Contemporary Art and the Ghosts of Modernity." Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences Public Lecture. OCAD University, Toronto. 28 Oct. 2015. Lecture.

Bonnemaison, Sarah and Ronit Eisenback. *Installations by Architects: Experiments in Building and Design*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2009. Print.

Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Altermodern: Tate Triennial*. London: Tate Pub.; 2009. Print.

Buggey, Susan. *An Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes*. Ottawa: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1999. Print.

Burns, Carol. "On Site." *Drawing/building/text: Essays in Architectural Theory*. Ed. Andrea Kahn. New York: Princeton Architectural, 1991. 147-67. Print.

Burns, Carol, and Andrea Kahn. *Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Campbell, Susan. *Site lines: An exploration of physical mapping practices*. OCAD University, 2012.

Coulombe, Maxime. "Sculpture, You Ask?" in Espace Magazine, Issue 108, (Fall, 2014), pp. 7 – 8.

Pare, Andre, "Renewing Sculpture's Possibilities" in Espace Magazine, Issue 108, (Fall, 2014), pp. 2 - 4.

Corner, James. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*. New York: Princeton Architectural, 1999. Print.

Debord, Guy. "Text Archives Presituationist Texts Lettrist International." *Situationist International Online*. Web. 26 Sept. 2015.

De Certeau, Michel, and Steven Rendall. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: U of California, 1984. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1996. Print.

Doherty, Claire. *Situation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2009. Print.

Farooq, Sameer & Linschooten, Mirjam. "The Figure in the Carpet." 2015. Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga. Exhibition.

Foster, Hal. "An Archival Impulse." *October*: 3-22. Print.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias" *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*. Edited by Neil Leach. NYC: Routledge. 1997. pp. 330-336

Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards A Critical Regionalism: Six Points for An Architecture of Resistance." *The Anti-aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. New York, NY: New, 1998. 17-34. Print.

Fung, Richard, Greyson, John, and Kazimi, Ali. Rex vs. Singh. Vtape, 2009. Video.

Godfrey, Mark. "The Artist as Historian." *October* 120 (2007): 140-72. Print.

Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2010. Print.

Hajdin, Nives. "Seeing the Unseen: And Interview with Public Studio." *C Magazine* Issue 120 (Jan. 2014). Print.

Hassan, Jamelie, Melanie A. Townsend, and Scott Watson. *Jamelie Hassan: At the Far Edge of Words*. London, Ont.: Museum London, 2009. Print.

Heidegger, Martin. 'Building Dwelling Thinking'. *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader In Cultural Theory*. Neil Leach. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 1997. 97. Print.

"Heritage Mississauga - Aboriginal Culture." *Heritage Mississauga - Aboriginal Culture*. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.

Hirmer, Lisa. "Dirt Piles: Collected thoughts on the landscape of construction." *On Site* Issue 26 (Dec. 2011) pp. 18-21.

Holl, Steven. "Anchoring." *Anchoring: Selected Projects, 1975-1991*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural, 1991. Print.

Horra, Dipna. "Running with Concepts: The Sonic Edition." Blackwood Gallery Conference Presentation. University of Toronto, Mississauga. 23-24 Feb. 2013. Presentation.

Ingold, Tim. "The Temporality of the Landscape." *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling & Skill*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

Johnson, Merritt. *Core Samples*, 2014. IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts Residency, Santa Fe. *iaiamocnasear.org*. Web. 28 Apr. 2016.

Johnson, Merritt and Luger, Cannupa Hanska. "How to Shake Hands With Water." Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 14 Aug. 2014. Web. 28 Apr. 2016.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants*. Washington: Milkweed Editions, 2013. Print.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Two Moments From The Post-Medium Condition." *October* 116 (2006): 55-62. Print.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" in October Magazine, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979), pp. 30 – 44. Print.

Kwon, Miwon. "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity." *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Ed. Erika Suderburg. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2000. pp. 38-65. Print.

LaBelle, Brandon, and Achim Wollscheid. *Site Specific Sound: Brandon LaBelle*. Frankfurt: Selektion. 2004. Print.

Leach, Neil. "Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Space." *Habitus: A Sense of Place*. By Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby. Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2002. pp. 297-315. Print.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Oxford, OX, UK: Blackwell, 1991. Print.

Lippard, Lucy. "Notes From a Recent Arrival." Longing and Belonging: From the Faraway Nearby. Santa Fe: SITE Santa Fe, 1995. pp. 107-114. Print.

Mahmoudian, Azar, curator. "I've Heard Stories", Film Program. Toronto, ON.: Blackwood Gallery, SAVAC and City of Toronto Archives; 2015. Print.

Matta-Clark, Gordon, Jeffrey Kastner, Sina Najafi, Frances Richard, and Jeffrey A. Kroessler. *Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's "fake Estates"* New York: Cabinet, in Conjunction with the Queens Museum of Art and White Columns, 2005. Print.

Meyer, James. "The Functional Site; or The Transformation of Site Specificity." *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Ed. Erika Suderburg. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2000. pp. 23-38. Print.

Mignolo, Walter. "Introduction." *Local Histories/global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2000. 1-45. Print.

Mignolo, Walter. "On Pluriversality." *Waltermignolo.com*. 20 Oct. 2013. Web. 9 May 2016.

Mignolo, Walter. "Decolonial Aesthetics (I)." *TDI Transnational Decolonial Institute*. 2011. Web. 09 May 2016. <https://transnationaldecolonialinstitute.wordpress.com/decolonial-aesthetics/>.

Miner, Dylan. "Radical Migrations through Anishinaabewaki An Indigenous Re-Mapping of the Great Lakes." *Deep Routes: The Midwest in All Directions*. White Wire, 2012. Print.

Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1980. Print.

Pallasmaa, Juhani "Hapticity and Time: Notes on Fragile Architecture," *Architectural Record* (May 2000): 79.

Paterson, M. "Haptic Geographies: Ethnography, Haptic Knowledges and Sensuous Dispositions." *Progress in Human Geography* 33.6 (2009): 766-88. Print.

Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives. "Removing Barriers: Why did people keep coming to Canada and Peel?" Brampton, Ontario: PAMA, 2016. Plaque.

Rachael Williams. "Massive Retail Plaza to Be Built near Streetsville." *Mississauga.com*. 9 Nov. 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.

Redfield, Wendy. "The Supressed Site: Revealing the Influence of Site on Two Purist Works." Ed. Carol Burns. *Site Matters: Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*. Ed. Andrea Kahn. New York: Routledge, 2005. 185-222. Print.

Skeoch, A. (2001). *Mississauga: Where the river speaks*. Mississauga, Ont.: Mississauga Library System.

Slager, Henk. "A Critique of Archival Reason." *The Pleasure of Research*. Print.

Sletto, B. "Inclusions, Erasures and Emergences in an Indigenous Landscape: Participatory Cartographies and the Makings of Affective Place in the Sierra

De Perija, Venezuela." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 33.5 (2015): 925-44. Web.

Statistics Canada. La Roche Crt, Region of Peel in United Way of Peel Region Neighbourhood Development. 2006 Census Data. Ottawa, Ont.: Statistics Canada, 2006.

Sundberg, Juanita. "Decolonizing posthumanist geographies" *Cultural Geographies*. Vol 21 No.1 (2013) pp. 33-47.

Thauberger, Althea. *Duane Linklater, Learning Susan Hobbs Gallery.* Aug. 2013. Web. Mar. 2015. http://www.susanhobbs.com.

Todd, Zoe. "Indigenizing the Anthropocene." *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies*. London: Open Humanities, 2015. 241-54. Print.

Watts, Vanessa. "Indigenous Place-Thought & Agency Amongst Humans and Non-humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a European world tour!)" *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* Vol. 2 No. 1 (2013) pp. 20-34.

Wendl, Nora. "Pruitt-Igoe tomorrow re-visiting a modernist icon." *On Site* Issue 33 (2015) pp. 4-9.

Zumthor, Peter. *Thinking Architecture*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006. Print.

Appendix: Thesis show documentation

Fig.1: View of the gallery from Dundas Street. Transducer, "CIRiver" video installation.
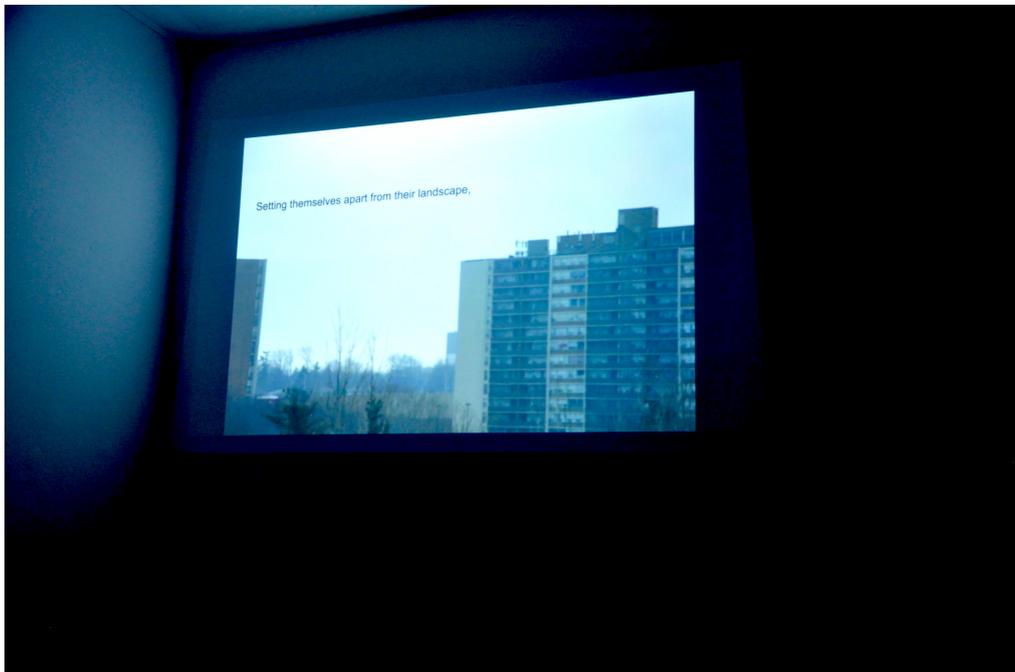

Figure2: "CIRiver" video installation view.

Figure 3. "CIRiver" video installation view, earth mound hides Tall Tower.

Figure 4. "Dormant Streetsville"
Projected Image, Carousel slide projector, pencil drawing of Milkweed on graph
paper.

Figure 5. "Dormant Streetsville"
Projected Image, Carousel slide projector, pencil drawing of vegetation on graph
paper.
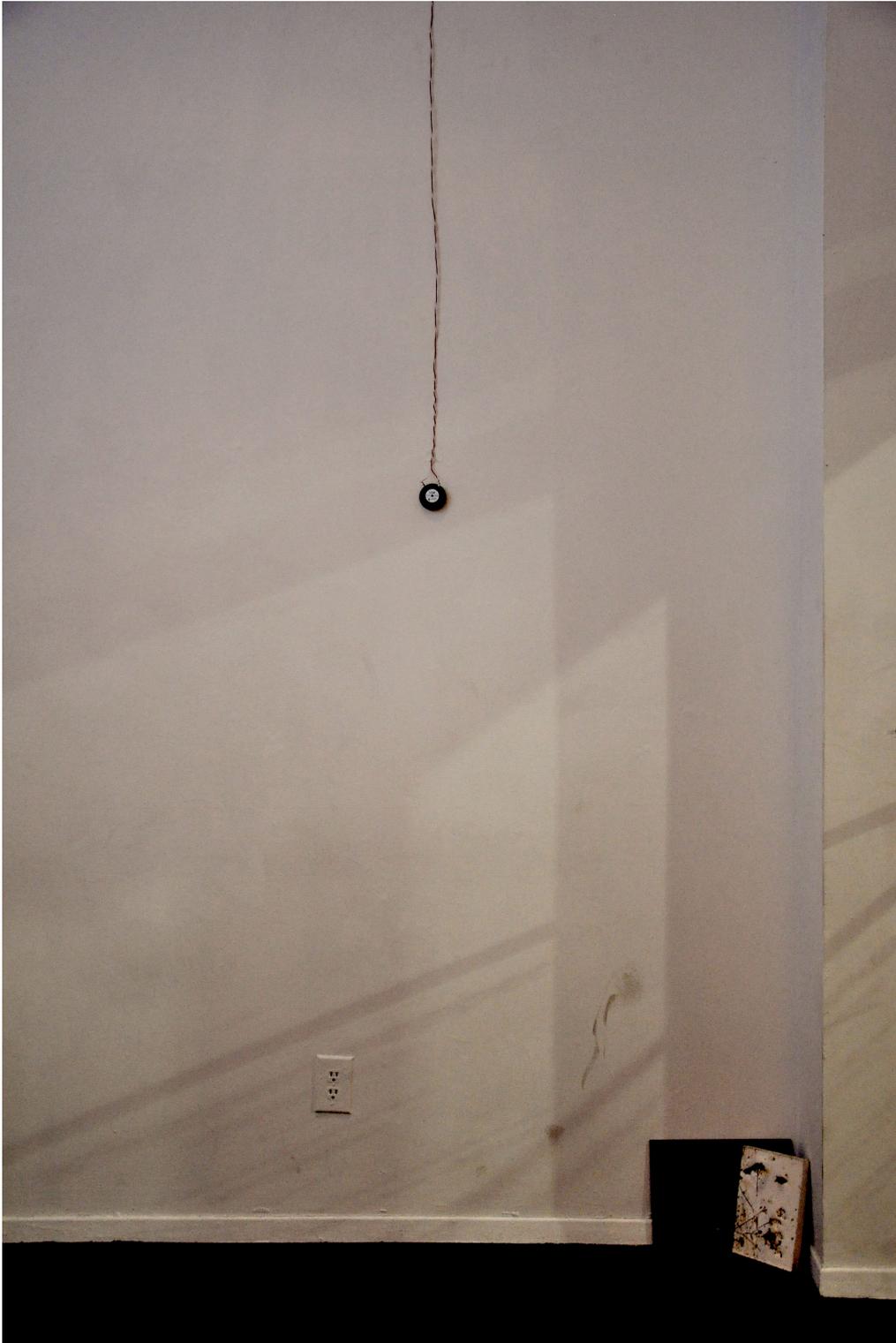
Figure 6. "Dormant Streetsville"
Plaster, embedded vegetation, black reflexive plexi-glass, transducer, wall.
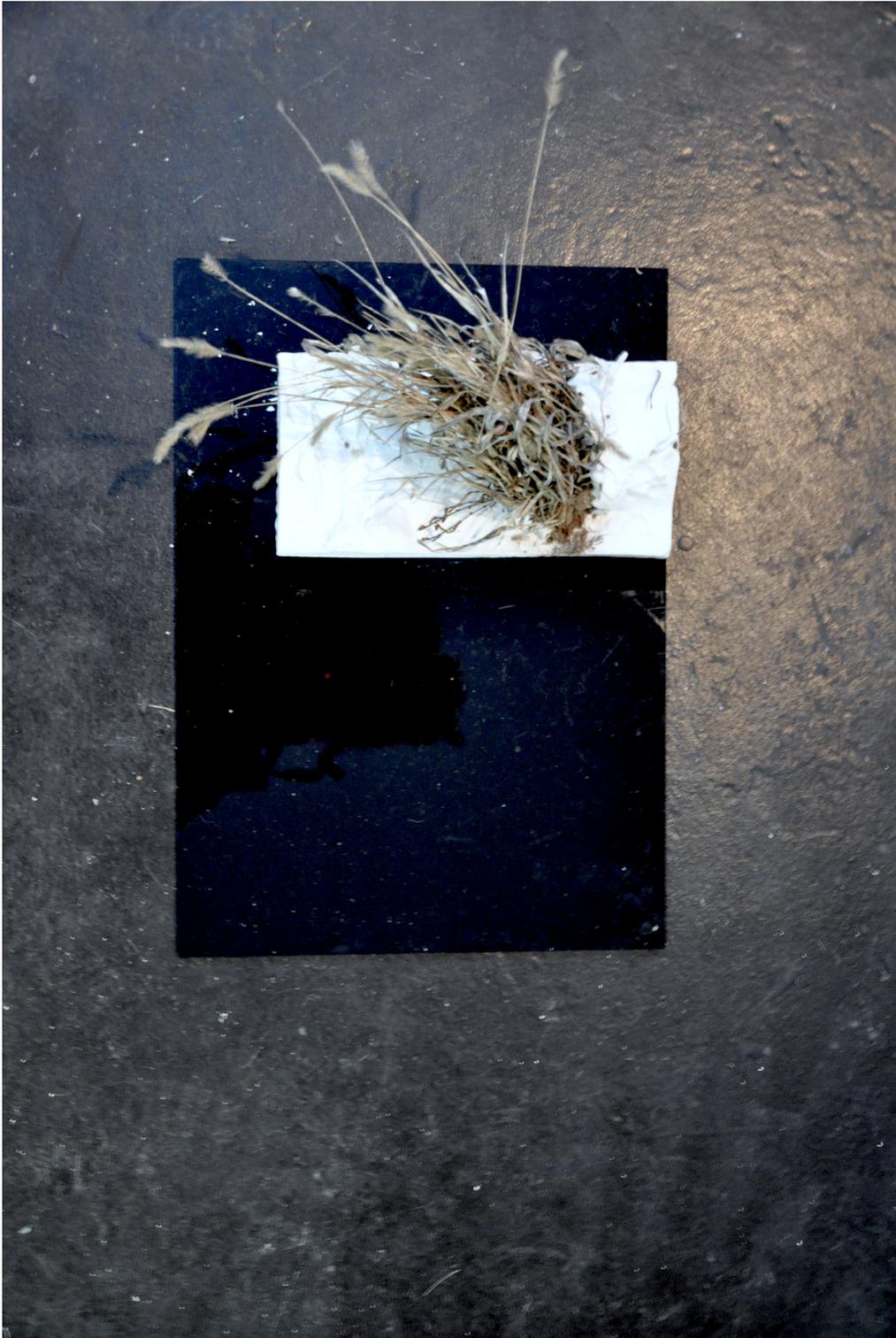
Figure 6. "Dormant Streetsville"
Plaster, embedded vegetation, black reflexive plexi-glass.

Figure 7. "Dormant Streetsville"
Plaster, embedded vegetation, black reflexive plexi-glass, detail view.
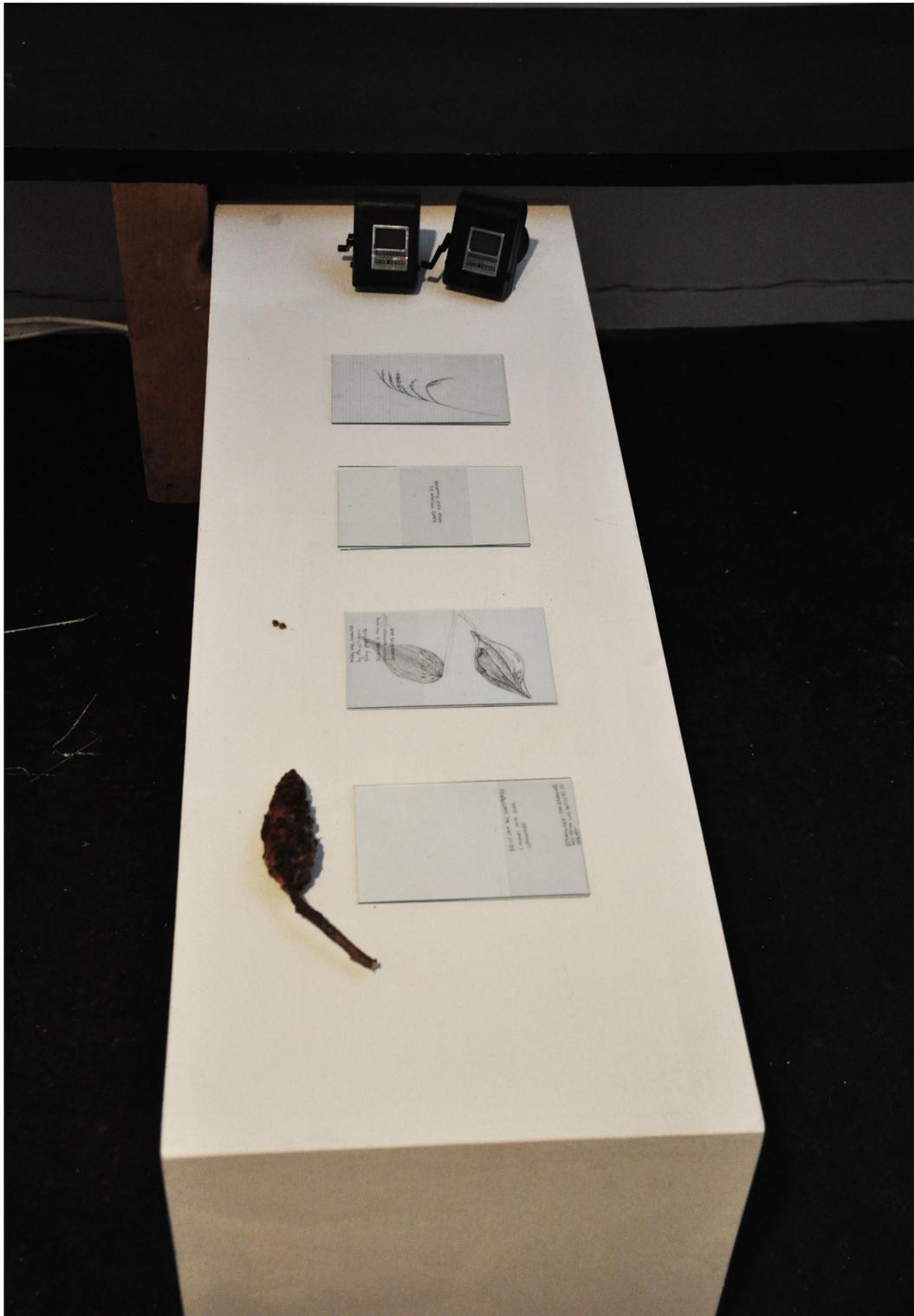
Figure 8. "Dormant Streetsville"
Pencil drawings of various vegetation on graph paper, glass frame, sumac, lomokino
viewers with film, installation view.

Figure 9. "Dormant Streetsville,"
"Fruit can be sweetened and made into lemonade, Etymology: the branches are
rough like antlers in" glass frame, sumac, detail view.
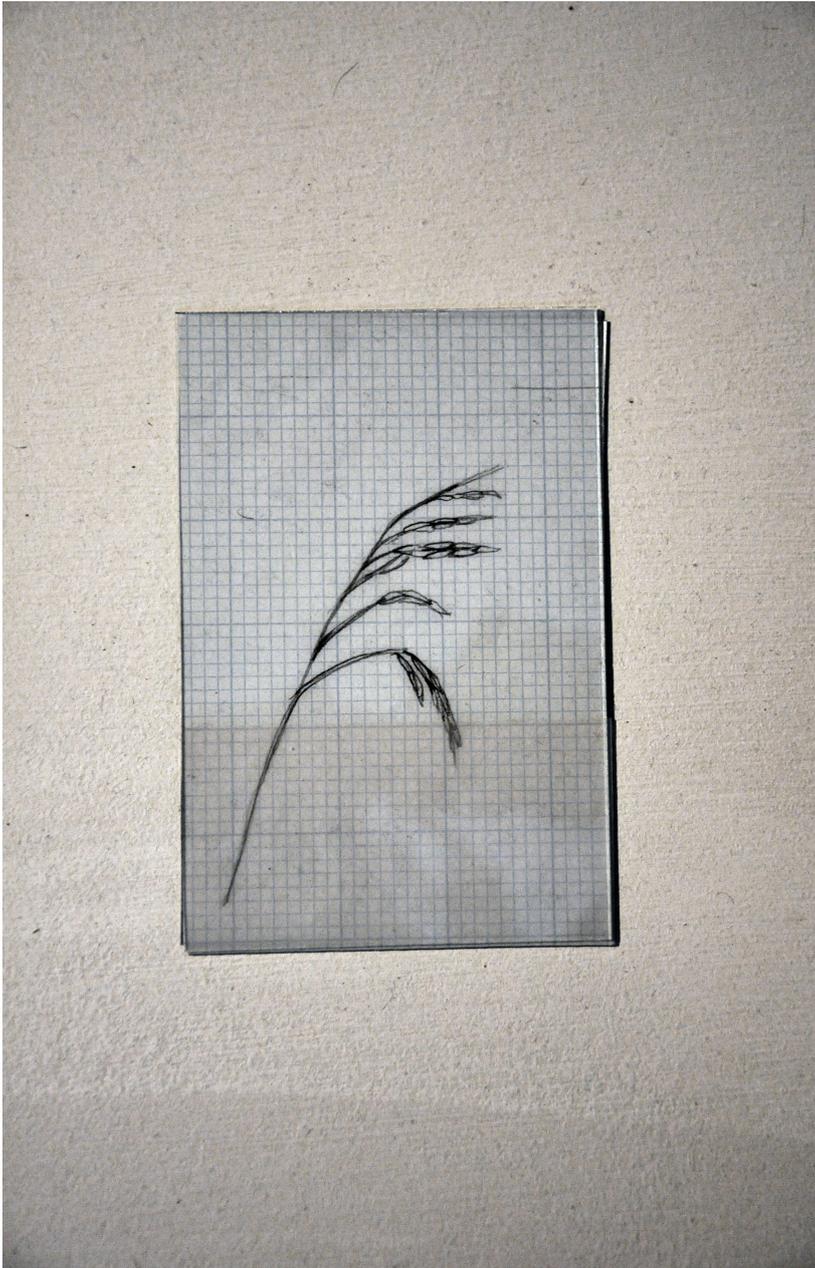
Figure 10. "Dormant Streetsville,"
Pencil drawing of wheat on graph paper, glass frame, detail view.
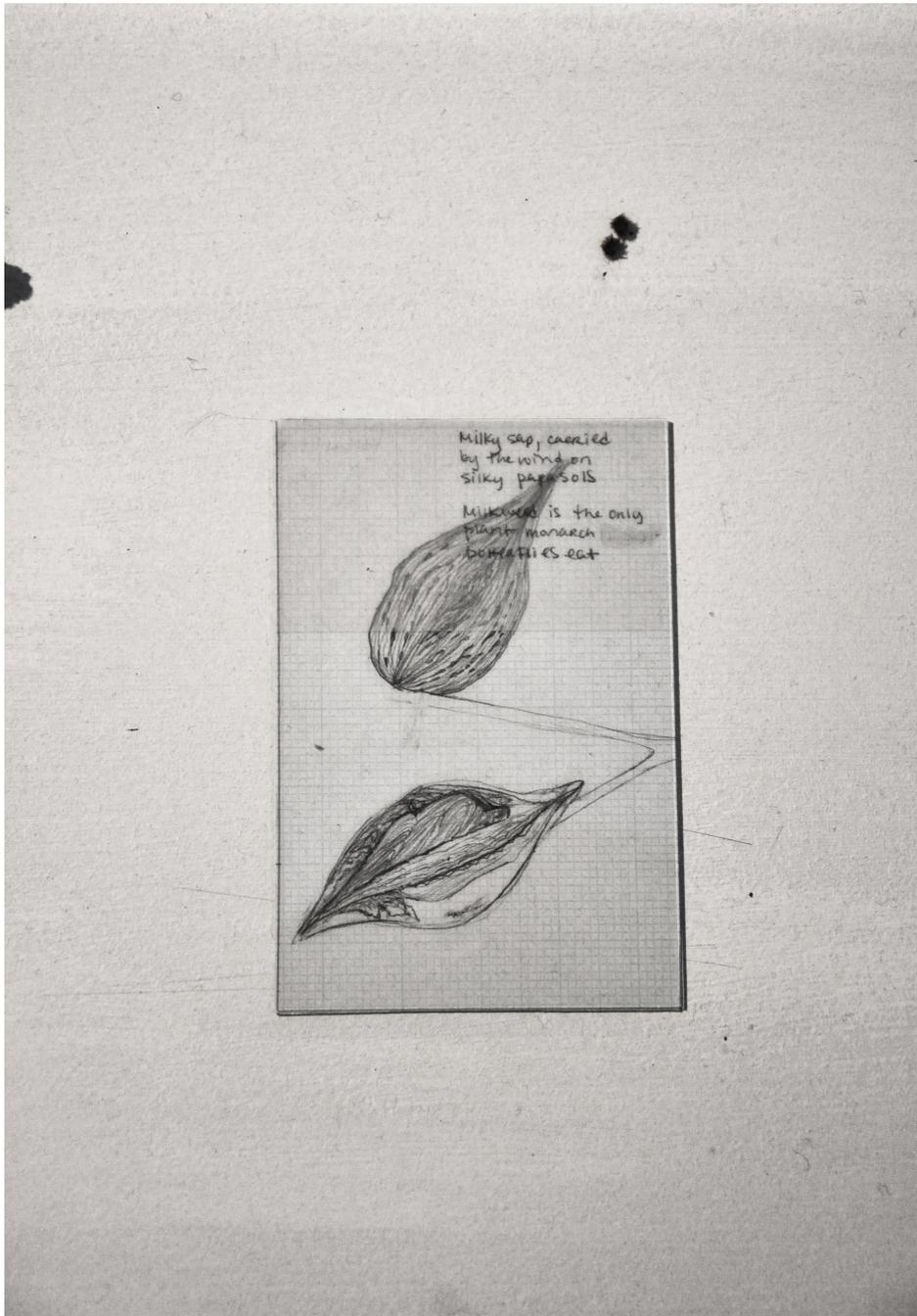
Figure 11. "Dormant Streetsville,"
"Milky sap, carried by the wind on silky parasols
"Milkweed is the only plant monarch butterflies eat."
Pencil drawing of milkweed on graph paper, glass frame, detail view.