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Forest Walk

Forest Walk, Audio walk, 12 minutes.
Banff Centre for the Arts, Canadian
Artist in Residence Program, Collection
of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian
Rockies. Alberta, Canada (1991)

I was doing a residency at the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, experimenting with some various technologies, and I created what became my first audio walk. It didn't have very good instructions and the quality of my mixing was terrible since it was mixed on a 4-track cassette deck, but the work really inspired me and changed my thinking about art. Probably only 10 people heard it at the time, but it was the prototype for all the walks that followed. When I listen to it now, I can appreciate the freshness and looseness, even with all of the bad editing.→

JANET Go towards the brownish green garbage can. Then there's a trail off to your right. Take the trail, it's overgrown a bit. There's an eaten-out dead tree.

Looks like ants. *sfx of footsteps then stopping then hand brushing tree bark. walking starts again.*

JANET Walk up the path. I haven't been in this forest for a long time ... it's good to get away from the centre, from the building noises, to idyllic nature. Ok, there's a fork in the path, take the trail to the right.

sfx of walking, stopping, bending down.

JANET There's some paint on the stone, looks like ... maybe its ... no it is paint. I wonder what it's doing there.

Some artist painting the sunset I guess. *sfx of walking again, sfx crows loud, train horn in background.*

JANET It's so beautiful in the forest at night ... it's kind of spooky though.

JVOX *prerecorded* I just want to be with you.

MAN'S VOICE I find that hard to believe sometimes.

JVOX We've had wonderful times.

MAN'S VOICE It's my fucked personality, blame it on me.

Bathroom Stories

Bathroom Stories, Audio walk, 5 minutes.
 Curated by Donald Goodes for the
 group exhibition *Art All Over My*
House, part of the Desert Art Event.
 Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada (1991)

I recorded this piece in the bathroom where I was living at the time and talked about memories of another bathroom, the one in Donald's house. I was experimenting with the layering of voices to get across the idea of different time periods.~

*sound of door closing then sound of
 me taking my pants down and using
 the toilet throughout dialogue.*

JANET I think I remember a green door with black squares on it and a line of black that goes all the way around the room. And there's a book on the back of the toilet, the toilet ...

JANET *voiceover comes in overlapping* She had her hands braced on the rack bent over the water, which was still in the tub. They'd just finished bathing together and one thing led to another and they were making love, his pelvis against her buttocks, his hands pulling back on her hips, both were sweating, they needed another bath soon. But the rack pulled off, she fell with it, banging her head against the tub, cutting her arm, his penis went limp with the shock. And they drove to the hospital; her head was bruised but ok and she needed five stitches on her arm. They told the doctor that she was reaching for a towel on the tub when it broke.

JANET ... and there's a window above the bathtub. *sfx flushing toilet and washing hands.*

JANET If you look out the window you can see the church steeple ... or was that in France, I can't remember.

JANET *voiceoverlapping* The nurse said to the doctor: that reminds me of the time the guy bruised his penis so badly that he couldn't have intercourse for six months. They were doing it leaning against the wall and it slipped out and hit it against the wall, banging it so hard that he broke it. Of course he had heard that from a friend of a friend at a party, where all stories eventually lead to talk of sex.

JANET I can't remember but there's a piece of art above the shelf ...

Janet's *Bathroom Stories* was created for the independently organized, site-specific *Desert Art Event* that took place in Lethbridge, Alberta, a small city with a population of 75,000. It is an intense yet unassuming town where you can see the mountains a hundred kilometers away rise abruptly out of the arid prairie. It is also where liberal university students, Christian fundamentalists, descendants of the Siksika Nation Blood and Piegan tribes, traditional Hutterites, and one of the most cohesive art communities I have ever experienced all coexist, but rarely intermingle.↵ The part of the event dedicated to *in situ* art was subtitled *Art All Over My House*. And it was just that. Seventeen artists exhibited all sorts of installations in various rooms of my upstairs apartment, in the front and back yards, as well as on the porch, tracks, and in the dirt basement. Janet created an audio work for my cramped

bathroom. There was an old, cast-iron, claw-foot tub that Janet had asked me to wash in and leave to go cold for the duration of the show. A Walkman with headphones was screwed to the wall just outside the lavatory door. The cord was long enough to reach inside. Janet used sounds recorded on location, like the closing door, the flushing toilet, the washing of hands in the sink, and the sound of water in the bath.↵ And then there was Cardiff's seductive, signature voice speaking dreamily. The narrator drew attention to the features of the bathroom, as if she were trying to recall them because she was no longer there. What was on the shelves? On the walls? These observations and ghostly sounds, like the water running when it wasn't really running, punctuated other strange stories about sex and highly charged, metaphoric images of women sinking. It was all woven together using dream-like jumps in logic.↵

DONALD GOODES

An Inability to Make a Sound

An Inability to Make a Sound, Audio walk with film, and mixed media; 10 minutes. Curated by SUSAN BUSTIN for Eye Level Gallery, Halifax, Canada (1992). Collection of the University of Lethbridge Art Gallery (edition 2/4). (A French version was curated by SYLVIE FORTIN for La Chambre Blanche in Quebec City, Canada, 1994.)

I decided that I would try to use the concepts of a walk for a gallery space. We were renting a large studio in Montreal at the time so I produced it there, using some of the cinderblocks and scaffolding planks that were scattered around the neighborhood. I felt that I needed a route or path, so I set up the planks in the studio to create a circuit. In the various galleries where this piece has been exhibited, we would just rent scaffolding and buy cinderblocks and remount it.→

sfx woman comes running in from behind and yells to man running with her

WOMAN I don't believe you, that's not what happened. *she runs past, onto the boards, scuffling starts, there are wrestling sounds as two people push each other around. there is the sound of a plank getting pushed and knocked off the blocks. I stop, wait, and then start walking again*

JANET Follow the sound of my steps.

MAN *yells to the woman* Ok, you win, you're better, you're better, you're right.

WOMAN Fuck you asshole!

JANET You're lying to me, I've heard this all before, through the walls, waking me in the middle of the night. I listened with a glass so I know. *sound of people scrambling and falling, one person on top of the other. you can hear their wrestling and breathing*

JANET This is a trip to find something that I've lost ... There's always an inability to make a sound, make a voice, she said this, I said that, I did this ... but no real sounds come out. Maybe the largest speaker in the world will tell me what I want to hear. *violin player comes in, then fades out. my footsteps are heard in the room*

JANET It's like trying to scream in a nightmare.

Louisiana Walk, Audio walk, 11 minutes.
 Curated by BRUCE FERGUSON for the
 group exhibition *Walking and Thinking
 and Walking from NowHere* at Louisiana
 Museum, Humlebæk, Denmark (1996).
 Collection of Louisiana Museum.

Louisiana Walk

This is the first walk that really became a filmic soundtrack and it created a format or style that I have been experimenting with ever since. The narrative uses the device of a man offsite watching a surveillance video of a woman walking in the garden. This woman, my voice, communicates with him through the image he sees. She also refers to his postcards of the museum grounds that he sent her years before. They are trying to locate a moment in time when things went wrong between them.–

*start to hear accordion music ...
 crows in trees to right. Accordion
 player walks around listener*

JANET Let's stop and listen, close your eyes, trust me.

JANET I have the postcard of this place that he sent me years ago. Things have changed a lot. The grass is long now, coming up through the stones on the walk here. The building in front of us is gutted, the windows broken, skylights caved in, the brick walls singed by smoke. The sculptures are covered with graffiti. The old house is still standing, partially protected by the razor wire fence around it I guess. Someone's cooking something. Smells like burnt meat.

*sound of fire,
 dogs barking to right, then jet goes by
 overhead*

GEORGE *whispers in left ear* All I could see on the video was you walking along this path but I couldn't see in front of you, to see what was to come.

*walking sound, sound of explosions,
 seagulls ... then silence*

JANET We're back. It's like the picture again, beautiful green lawn. People walking around, *sound of birds* someone's giving a lecture. Let's stop and listen. *sound of museum tour*

guide lecturing about Moore sculpture talking about its solidity and how the figures are trapped in time. she talks about Moore saying that sculpture is like a journey. after you've walked around it, your view has changed

[...]

JANET One simple action can change things so much. If only I hadn't looked out to sea right at that particular point.

GEORGE *whispers in left ear* I think we should try it one more time.

JANET He's with us, trying to find that precise moment, lost in the particles on the videotape.

I commissioned Janet Cardiff to create this walk in the park for a group exhibition featuring contemporary artworks that drew upon perambulation or peripatetic thinking or a combination of both. Her piece guided spectators through the nearby landscape, starting from an exit door near the far end of the museum and near the sea itself. The soundtrack mentioned specific views and objects, but it also included intimate histories and the impression of planes overhead or a jogger from behind. The fictional and the factual alternated for the visitor who was 'choreographed' through headphones. Particularly memorable

was the way in which the narrative isolated the visitor from the landscape and, at the same time, involved them by virtue of specific visual references. This pull between the intimate and the unknowable, as well as the private and the public, grew stronger as the walk progressed. The walk was an exercise of trust between the artist and the participants, who never knew where they were being led, or really even why, and it engendered an active and engaged attitude in the audience and their relationship to art. I also remember how I was smiling all along the way, because the narrative gave me such great pleasure. –

BRUCE FERGUSON

Münster Walk, Audio walk with mixed media props, 17 minutes. Curated by Kasper König (with assistant curator Ulrike Groos) for *Skulptur. Projekte in Münster 1997*. Collection of Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster, Germany. (1997)

Münster Walk

Kasper König invited me to take part in *Skulptur. Projekte in Münster 1997* after seeing *Louisiana Walk*. He was able to conceive of the walk as sculpture, which gave me an insight into my own work. I had never been to Germany before. On my various trips there, I did historical research and I just wandered around. Everything was thickly layered with the past, and imbued with ‘German-ness.’ I decided to work with an older male character because the town was populated with older men wandering around, sitting on benches, unemployed or retired. I kept thinking about their relationship to the war, or about family and friends that they could have lost in the war. So I created a character that was tracing his dead daughter’s footsteps through the town, standing where she would have stood, creating maps and writings of his own wanderings. This story was also inspired by a friend of mine who had just lost her son in a car crash. She tried to follow or reproduce his movements through the landscape by re-photographing many of the photographs he had taken. By looking through the camera at what he would have seen, she could try to recapture some of his memory.–

*sound of weird repetitive piano banging
to left as if it comes from the building*

JANET I think this is the Bishop's house to the left. I'm sorry I can't tell you the history of these buildings, or give you a real audio tour. I'm just a visitor here. *piano gets louder throughout this dialogue. there's no street noise*

JANET It's strange being here, in this country. Somehow I grew up being afraid of Germany, knowing it only from American war movies and spy novels. *piano ends abruptly*

[...]

YOUNG MAN Tell me again, I'll try to understand.

JANET OK, I'll describe to you what I saw ... I walked through the museum, and looked at the murals of the ruined buildings, the faces staring out at me.

YOUNG MAN You see a car hit him.

JANET *voice overlaps with man's voice* I remember locking my brother in the closet.

YOUNG MAN It's not your fault. You just saw it.

JANET *voice overlaps with man's voice* He was too young to get out. I heard his screams and I laughed.

[...]

JANET I'm at home again. I watch the videotape of me walking down the streets, beside the canal. I can only see in front of me, only what the camera shows. I can't see him following me, counting my footsteps. I lie in bed watching him sleep. One arm above his head. His body twitching, trying to act out his dreams.

YOUNG MAN What time is it? Why aren't you sleeping

JANET How can you be really sure of anyone. *sound of real Münster comes up again, birds, city noise*

JANET Let's walk again. We have someone to meet ...

JANET Go behind the bench to the right across the grass.
Towards the stone sculpture that looks like
mountains . . .

sound of choir singing to the right, sounds like it is coming from the church, walking sounds, construction sounds, still sound of choir singing

JANET I think this is a Jesuit church. Keep walking straight ahead, across the street. There's a red car parked here.

OLDER MAN From the tower to the palace. 985 steps.

JANET *past the bicycles* Last night I dreamt I was flying over Vienna. I remember a deep black sky and the wind rushing against my body. What does flying mean in a dream.

sound of professor lecturing from windows at left

JANET I read a book, called *Experiments with Time* that says dreams are just as much from the future as from the past. I like that idea.

go up the stairs, someone runs by you

Even after eight years, I still have some very clear memories about working with Janet Cardiff on the production of *Münster Walk*. I remember when we recorded the sound of horses' hooves, which makes up about 2 seconds of the seventeen-minute piece. On a Saturday morning, Janet, George Bures Miller and I met on a deserted path in the middle of some fields near Münster. They brought the equipment, which included a dummy head, and I had arranged for a farmer to bring along two horses and carts. During this meeting, for the first time, I became fully aware of the complexity and technical precision involved in making the walks. The possibility of conveying time processes in audible form and creating complex acoustic representations of space lends the auditory experience a remarkably deceptive authenticity.↵ At the time of *Skulptur. Projekte*, I had been living in Münster for almost 10 years, and one of the most surprising and stimulating experiences during the exhibition

was how the artists introduced me to new places in the city, or made me aware of them in a different way. The sites that the artists selected were often unfamiliar to longtime residents, although many were close to well-known paths; sometimes, they were hidden or simply hard to access. Janet Cardiff's seventeen-minute walk through the area around the Landesmuseum Münster was brought to life by a soundtrack of subtly differentiated voices, sounds and noises. The inclusion of sounds that were out of place, surprising and "unforehear-able" led to curious, disconcerting refractions on the perfect surface of an apparently friendly city, and triggering irritating moments of recollection, consternation or even threat by means of alienation. Even today, whenever I am in Münster, moments from *Münster Walk* – whispered comments, the sound of church bells or horses' hooves – continue to come to mind when I cross the path or [...] I am simply reminded of it by the noises of the city.↵

During the opening ceremonies of "Now Here, 96" at Louisiana Museum (on the shore of the Baltic Sea) I was happy to escape the super ambitious overall exhibition not suited for an opening crowd to leave my passport to get a headset for the park.

Since the name Janet Cardiff didn't mean anything to me other than she was Canadian - where I had worked and lived many years ago - I started in twilight.

The tour I took 2 times around since I was enchanted by losing a sense of time and a very different orientation of the elegant park once private which turned public with the best contemporary art of the 60s on boards.

A modern sculpture park is doomed to be locked into a period piece such as Kröller-Müller in Otterloo, Middleheim in Antwerp et al - just what Klaus Byslmann and I tried to avoid in the Münster exhibition 1977, 87 - so Janet Cardiff was a definite must for 97.

'Münster Walk' turned out much more alien to me, in a city I had spend some of my later childhood - with an underside - slightly doomed in a city 80% destroyed during WWII and reconstructed and learning gathered a patina in the meantime that suggests an amnesia that "Münster Walk" uncovers - going back much further with the sounds of horse carriages from great grand parents - up to the mad scientist's underground - the association of Peter Love's role in the film 'Arctic + Laca' (sic?) and the reference to his medical doctorate in Heidelberg after WWI (or in a different mode the 'Mad Professor' of Jerry Lewis).

Both references - the bunker at the end of the tour, the horses soon after the beginning are few splinters but those which still echo - a "universal" permanent scene echoing a virtual Münster.

Janet and George - you inscribed yourself not only in the exhibition but into a city you had not visited before.

Dubai, April 6th, 05

Chiaroscuro

Chiaroscuro, Audio walk and telescope, 12 minutes. Curated by Gary Garrels for the group exhibition *Present Tense: Nine Artists in the Nineties* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA (1997)

This was my first walk for the inside of a museum and it posed some challenges in terms of dealing with a fairly consistent, boring soundscape and a limited amount of space. Right away I knew I would work with the stairwell as a memory map that unleashes the memories of the walker as she climbs the stairs. Four years later I went back and did a video walk there, again using the stairwell as an important element. I didn't realize until I looked back at the scripts that in both pieces there is a scene with a man telling a woman what to do in an intimate situation.~

JANET Push the elevator button. We'll go down to the first floor. *sound of bedroom, walking around on wooden floor ...*

MAN *saying lines from Hitchcock's Vertigo* No, that dress isn't right ... try on this one ... I want you to wear these shoes. [...]

JANET Let's go up. Go around the corner to the front of the main stairs. Walk up the stairs. I'll walk slowly so we can stay together.

JANET I remember the basement ... clammy stone walls covered in blackness, the smell. A hand under my shirt ... Let's go to the left and up the stairs ... I never imagined that love could hurt my chest like a balloon blowing up inside me.

JANET Let's continue up the stairs ... we'll stop at the next balcony ... I saw a drawing of a building that reminds me of this one, a temple for a memory map ... a technique for remembering ... it was one that was used by the Greeks. It had circular corridors, open to the sky in the middle. As you walked through it in your mind you could remember things. [...]

I kept thinking about the idea of a museum as a repository of experiences and memories and a place to which you can return and consider your own changes. Traditionally, museums stayed the same over many years and you could come back to a room ten years later and experience it differently. Similarly, you might revisit a work of art, like a painting by Matisse, after ten years and see it completely differently. The work of art doesn't change, you change. The museum, however, is a very special institution, and now they are not only being renovated, but their very function is being reconsidered and reconceived. In some ways, the building of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art fits oddly in the city. The landscape and light are extremely beautiful but the building turns its back on it, separated from the street and the outside environment. But it is wonderful because once you penetrate that membrane and come inside, it opens up into a grand operatic space, rather like a stage set. Without people, it is quite cold and aloof, but people like the building and like coming into it, and it can become an intensely animated space. The galleries are disconnected from the public space, which is good because although you have a very theatrical public space, once you go through the doors into the galleries, the architecture steps back and the art becomes self-contained.

The building itself proposes a kind of journey, opening up architecturally, expanding, from the lower level to the top, ending with a bridge that carries you under an extraordinary oculus into the upper galleries. I was very curious about how Janet would respond to the building. What she did was brilliant and wonderful. She started at the top, where you would pick up the recording to take with you. The first thing she asked you to do was to look out at the landscape, through a large window that was usually screened and obscured. Her approach was opposite to that of the building, it pulled you out to look at the breathtaking landscape. But I think she also understood very well the internal contradictions of the building itself – that it has pretenses to being both a piazza and a cathedral. She created both a sense of experiencing yourself in a public arena but also the feel of being in a building that suggests a spiritual journey, an introspective, cerebral place. She wove between these experiences of the public and the private, of the secular and the sacred. It was a new building at that time, without a history. What Janet did was to add layers to time, to add events one could not possibly have experienced before in the building. So it's about a building and its possibilities, about what will happen over time. Every time you go into a museum where you have been before, you bring something from your previous experiences. Of course, when you're in a new building, that doesn't exist. Janet built histories, memories, voices, and events that had not yet occurred, and probably never will into the emptiness. Taking Janet's walk at that time was, in a way, looking back into the future while again making the present palpable and visceral.

The Empty Room

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller,
The Empty Room, Audio walk installation with sculpture, 9 minutes.
 Curated by Martin Janda for Raum
 Aktueller Kunst, Vienna, Austria (1997)

Martin Janda invited us to do an exhibition in his space in Vienna. We decided to experiment with combining an installation with an audio walk. We strung a multitude of curtains to make a labyrinth of hallways, and then situated a revolving loud speaker, a miniature house, and a table, on which there were books, electronics, and a latex rubber head cast from my face.–

- 29 JANET I walk these halls at night when they think I'm asleep. I go over to the window, opening it wide, letting in the night air ... and then I jump. *carousel music and crazy singing*
- JANET Listen to me, follow my footsteps. Go through the curtain.
- JANET Walk quietly, walk slowly ... The doctor doesn't like to be disturbed ... Wait, someone's coming. *sound of footsteps walking by, keys, door opening, doctor's voice from "Frankenstein's Bride": something about the mysteries of life and death. sound of curtain moving*
- JANET Some nights I feel my bed breathing, going up and down like there's a sleeping body beneath me. *pause*
 Let's go on. *scary music, laughter? footsteps, then violin is heard.*
- JANET Stop, listen ... he plays every night. *violin gets closer ... player plays around listener*
- OLDER MAN'S VOICE You are getting sleepy ... your eyes are closing, but you can still see.
- OLDER MAN'S VOICE When you leave this building you will only remember the emptiness, the white walls, the long hallways. You did not see her here.

In *The Empty Room*, visitors enter the gallery space from the stairwell of a late-nineteenth-century building in Vienna mixed with residential and office space. In collaboration with George Bures Miller, Janet Cardiff has created a walk through an exhibition space that measures only 50 square meters. Once inside the darkened room, visitors are provided with a flashlight and a Walkman.

The walk leads them through a corridor of plastic curtains with the faint sound of music from an old gramophone and brief instructions given through the headphones. Short statements, ambiguous commands and anxious encounters accompany them as they follow the labyrinthine path through curtains hung closer and closer together. →

MARTIN JANDA

Wanås Walk

Wanås Walk, Audio walk, 14 minutes.
Curated by Marika and Charles
Wachtmeister for The Wanås Foundation,
Knislinge, Sweden (1998). Collection
of The Wanås Foundation.

This was a very bucolic site, a farm, with animals, forests, and it was very quiet. Charles Wachtmeister became very involved in the recording process, taking me to his favorite hunting spots, trudging through underbrush and fields in the early mornings. He could spot a grouse or nightingale where I only saw leaves. The site made me work with very spatial sound effects, a forest filled with ghosts and voices. →

JANET Take the little path to the left, not the main one. It's covered with dry leaves. Go to the left of the compost pile. *female voice heard singing, chanting, in faraway forest ... then sound of man's voice singing in same way, seeming to answer woman's voice*

JANET Try to follow the path I've made through the woods. *sound of walking on dead leaves*

[...]

OLDER WOMAN Some believed it was because of the lovers. They had been tied up on to the trees so that the crows would pick out their eyes and the rains would drown them in their sorrow.

JANET Stop ... *sound of singers singing to each other*

OLDER WOMAN You can still hear them calling to each other if you listen. Some nights they cry to the moon to take them away. *sound of singers build then fade, sound of porcupine rustling behind, sound fades to nothing, fade up bird sounds*

JANET Let's continue. Keep going straight.

Janet Cardiff arrived at Wanås late one snowy evening. We walked outside in the moonlight. The castle was shrouded in mist. “It’s like Hollywood,” she gasped. We continued in the dark with only the moon to guide us. I see well in the dark, but Cardiff was confused. She had a difficult time finding her way around in general, which is why it is surprising that she specializes in walks – but maybe that is precisely why. She devotes herself to doing that which does not come easily to her. A new part of the park with no art caught Cardiff’s attention – a sunken garden surrounded by a thick stone wall. When she returned, this cold and wet spring, she walked around with her recording device equipped with audio and two

stereo microphones, placed the same distance apart as ears. Charles Wachtmeister helped her record the sounds of early Swedish summer: a hedgehog, pheasant chickens still in their eggs, newborn calves and insects, cooing doves and other birds. One evening she recorded our dinner conversation and instructed the other artists to whistle and yell. On my way home from the office at midnight one day, I came across Janet Cardiff recording the clock striking midnight. All she got was the sound of car wheels on gravel, which became the opening to Wanås Walk. As the critic Barry Schwabsky wrote, “Cardiff’s Wanås Walk might best be described as the sound track for a movie projected by your brain onto your eye as it takes place in the surrounding landscape.”¹ It is an often-unpleasant and complicated story about the end of the world – and then you hear the pecking of the pheasant chickens, the buzzing of a wasp, the neighing of horses, the song of the nightingale and fragments of the artists’ conversation. [...] Janet Cardiff opened up a totally new part of the park using nothing but sound, unlike others who carved out a big territory for themselves by placing a monumental sculpture there. She captured some of the mysterious and untamed quality of the park.²

1 BARRY SCHWABSKY, *Report from Sweden, Surrounded by Sculpture* in *Art in America* (January 1999) 54–56

2 This text was originally published in MARIKA WACHTMEISTER, *Art at Wanås* (Stockholm: Byggförlaget, 2001)

MARIKA WACHTMEISTER

Villa Medici Walk

Villa Medici Walk, Audio walk, 16 minutes. Curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Laurence Bossé for the group exhibition *La Ville, le Jardin, la Mémoire* at the Académie de France. Villa Medici, Rome, Italy (1998)

This walk has the best ending spot we've ever used, the souterrain, the underground cellar where a previous director had stored broken statues, with their arms and heads lying scattered, forgotten. There was also an extensive labyrinth of small tunnels that terrified me and had been used for mining. If you followed them, you could be lost forever.→ The walk started in a small garden with a grove of orange trees right outside our window in the castle. As we watched from above, the archaeologists unearthed a tiled and frescoed room from a lost villa that they had known was somewhere under the city but they had only just located. I think the experience of the layering of time in Rome led me to write a script that used a series of experiments with time to structure the piece. It was also the first piece in which I used the mini voice recorder as a device to form a character.→

start in small orange garden, crows cawing

GEORGE *taped and played from small tape recorder in room* Things have started to disappear. This morning my shoes were missing.

JANET I found his voice recorder in my suitcase. This machine has become him now, his words floating like a ghost in front of me. I want you to walk with me. I need to show you something. Try to walk with the sound of my footsteps so that we can stay together. Go through the doorway in the wall to the right ... past the iron gate, then go to the left. *sound of car* [...]

● **34 JANET** It's a great view of the Villa, the gardens ... the statues of the defeated Barbarians. The fountains. *sound of water starts. sound changes to fire crackling, bombs, helicopter*

GEORGE *static noise* The building is crumbling, fire coming out of the windows. The tall pines look like giant torches in the night.

- JANET Experiment no 1. Cut 100 snowflakes out of paper. Go to the top of the tower and throw them off, one at a time.
[...]
- JANET Let's walk again. Go towards the stone steps.
- JANET *whispered* Experiment no 3. Sit in a church and watch the light move across the wall. *sound of Latin mass, walking in church*
- JANET Go to the left.
- GEORGE When did it happen, or perhaps I just dreamt it. Some mornings when I wake up you're beside me and some mornings you're gone.
- JANET *whispered* Experiment no 4. Inscribe your lover's name into a wall. See which will last longer, your love or the words.
- JANET Go to the right. The bodies were buried just on the other side of this wall. A man is spraying the tennis courts with water. There's grass sticking out of the bricks. Too bad it's so loud here because of the traffic.
- GEORGE I woke up this morning and everything was gone. The house had disappeared, crumbled, just a pile of stones around me.
- JANET Walk through the gate, then to the right. Turn to the right along the road.
- JANET I remember a long laneway where I used to walk. Now it's buried under a field of corn.
- JANET *whispered* Experiment no 5. Hold your breath until you lose consciousness. *sound of taking breath and walking for about 15 seconds then my breath exhaling*
- JANET There's someone coming towards us. When I'm walking down a road like this I don't like to meet anyone. It's somehow too intimate. I'll pretend I'm looking at something in the bush ... 'Bonjour'
- GEORGE *whispering voice* It's starting, it's happening to you too.
- JANET He's wrong, things started to dissolve a long time ago.
scooter goes by

I wanted to approach Cardiff after hearing about her Louisiana Museum Walk in 1996 from my husband Cesare – he had experienced her walk there and had told me she had a beautiful voice. I was both intrigued and jealous. Then I saw her Playhouse installation in Berlin, and loved it. I subsequently met George and Janet in Münster in 1997, when they were distributing headphones to people for their walk there. I remember feeling her walk draw me into an intimate, close relationship, and then abruptly abandon me at the end of it in the little room. It was a particularly difficult time for me, having lost a child in an accident only two years earlier, and I remember being acutely sensitive to the feeling of loss. I think we connected immediately, because she understood the intensity of the experience I had with her work.↵ The Renaissance gardens of the Villa seemed like a perfect site for Janet to create a walk. They are in a modern city, yet they are protected from it by tall walls in a sort of *hortus conclusus* that also functions as a time capsule, so that they can step into the past, right in the middle of an urban

environment. There are private areas where the Villa residents live and public tracts that are open for promenades. I think this juxtaposition of two different worlds intrigued her. She was also interested in the Bosco, the ‘wilder’ part of the traditional garden, and the myth of the wilderness. George and Janet lived in the Villa for a period of several months.↵ People often ask how Cardiff’s walks transform the places they occur. Of course there are changes, but not more or less than any other element such as weather, time of day, or season transforms the place. Cardiff’s walks heighten our awareness of the way that **we always** alter our environments with our feelings, as we traverse them. Our memories constantly enter into our perception of what is the ‘here and now.’ I remember sounds of helicopters that Janet had put into the recording. I asked her about them, and she said Rome always had helicopters hovering above. I had never noticed that, but it is true. Now, when I walk in Rome, I always notice the helicopters above, and imagine the pilots and the people above, watching over the city. It makes me feel more vulnerable, rather than secure.↵

CAROLYN CHRISTOV-BAKARGIEV

Drogan's Nightmare

Drogan's Nightmare, Audio walk,
12 minutes. Curated by Ivo Mesquita
for XXIV Bienal de São Paulo.
São Paulo, Brazil (1998)

The Bienal building, a large futuristic cement warehouse with glass floor to ceiling windows, was a perfect site for a sci-fi story. There are three characters in this narrative: Janet (my voice), Drogan (George), and the Machine voice (a slowed-down woman's voice). It is about a character named Drogan and a woman that discovers him in a warehouse strapped to a bed controlled by machines. (The title and characters were taken from a short story written by George in the 1980s.)—

sound of cathedral, prayers

● 30 JANET The windows have been broken, they're covered in cardboard. People are huddled in little groups by fires. I see rows of beds, filled with naked bodies attached to wires and tubes.

DROGAN Am I there? Can you see me?

JANET This place smells like raw sewage and burnt meat.

barking dogs No one sees me. It's like I'm invisible. *someone yells hello*

JANET Stop, wait for a minute. *Janet yells 'Hello' in space, then other people yell hello. then a singer walks by singing a Brazilian folk song about a pair of caged birds. the bird's owner has plucked the eyes of the male one out so that the bird will sing more beautifully, but the bird sings about how sad it is that he will never see his lover again*

[...]

JANET I remember walking through the market. *sound of market*

MACHINE 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. *sound of bomb explosion, crashing glass*

JANET I'm afraid of these images that go through my mind, destroying things. A car runs you over. A knife to my throat, falling down stairs, bite into your flesh, pushed against the wall, fist to your face, choke you with my tongue, drowning in puke.

In *Drogan's Nightmare*, Cardiff built a kind of contemporary arcadia – an ideal place, a landscape for reflection, introspection, a place for a life of the mind. While artists from the classical era imagined it as a paradisaical place, an idealized space where man was in harmony with nature and culture, Cardiff's walk, on the other hand, reveals a disenchantment with consciousness. Starting in the XXIV Bienal de São Paulo, Cardiff took visitors outside for a

walk, where they became enmeshed in a plot that took them on a short journey into the interior of the park, but also, into the characters' interior. In the end, the visitors are left in the woods opposite the stream, with the memory, or perhaps delusional image of a moment that becomes enlightened by the desire between two human beings. The tour takes the visitors back to the starting point without the conclusion of the story into which they were taken.↵

IVO MESQUITA

Mallins' Night Walk (Cephalus and Procris), Audio walk, 15 minutes, 40 seconds. Curated by Joel and Sherry Mallin. Buckhorn, Pound Ridge, New York, USA. (1998) Collection of Joel and Sherry Mallin

Mallins' Night Walk

This piece is called *Night Walk* because many times after dinner I would wander into the darkness, walking as deeply as possible, against my fears, into the forest. A forest is a very dark place under the stars, filled with memories of mythic tales, and every sound that a squirrel or mouse makes frightens you. Logically I know that I'm safe but it is impossible for your body not to respond physically to the rustling leaves. Your instincts force you to retreat back into the light. Because of all of this fear I think it became my most violent and scary walk.↵ One night while staying there I also had a very strange, physical dream of someone trying to pry open my mouth, and I decided to work with the idea of night walking as a metaphor for dreaming and drowning.↵

*sound of walking around room,
sound of music box, ominous, weird*

JANET I awoke again with the feeling that my mouth was slowly being opened. In my half sleep my jaw struggled to close but insistent fingers seemed to open it again.

JANET Some people believe that ghosts enter your body through your mouth while you're sleeping. *sound of man singing in distance*

JANET I open my eyes and look over to see a man asleep beside me. His arm above his head, his skin glowing from the moonlight. I lean over and cover his mouth and nose with my hand and watch his body struggle to breath. I take my hand away quickly so that he won't wake up. *sound of trees blowing in wind*
[...]

OLDER WOMAN There is a woman who still wanders here, night after night searching through the dark forest, following her lover's footsteps, listening for his voice. *sound of crickets loud, sound of someone moving beside you*

JANET A red stake in the ground. A bright red leaf. A rubble pile like in every forest. *sound of man singing*

OLDER WOMAN She thinks that he comes here to love another woman but his words are only songs to the wind.

JANET Moss-covered cement blocks.

OLDER WOMAN She saw the torches approaching through the trees. Men on horses were riding towards her. *sound of horses running etc, scary music*

OLDER WOMAN Realizing her mistake she raced through the bushes to find him. Thinking that she was a wild animal he threw his spear towards her, hitting her in the chest.
[...]

sound of bullfrogs by lake

JANET It's night again. I'm standing by the lake, listening to the frogs talk. Each one separate but their voices creating a whole world for themselves. There's a plane flying over in the night sky. One small blinking light amongst all of the stars.

Sherry and I first experienced Janet's work at the *Skulptur. Projekte in Münster* in 1997. After arriving back in the U. S., we contacted Janet and invited her to our country home, Buckhorn, which is located in Pound Ridge, New York. Janet arrived with George and stayed with us for the weekend. They wandered all over the 15 acres of property that contains both manicured areas and woods. Janet also went down to the local historical society, because she wanted to get a sense of the history of the area as well as to see if there were any local myths that could be used for the story she was writing for the walk. Over the next three years, Janet came periodically for weekends

with George, but sometimes alone, and walked around the property carrying a severed head with earphones attached to its ears. Occasionally, she enlisted my assistance to produce noise by walking through autumn leaves, or she prevailed upon Sherry to gather up all of the grandchildren to run and laugh simultaneously. The walk, which meanders through the woods, is approximately twelve minutes long and is best done at dusk. The illusions inspired by the myriad voices seem to be more real and surreal as the light begins to fade. We have shared our walk with many of our friends and visitors from the art world, all of whom have fallen under the spell woven by Janet and George.

JOEL MALLIN

MoMA Walk, Audio walk, 12 minutes, 50 seconds. Curated by Kynaston McShine (with assistant curator Lilian Tone) for *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (1999)

MoMA Walk

I was visiting the new MoMA recently and I tried to find traces of where my walk once existed. There is a little bit left of the floor tiles that look like clouds. There is one section of the escalators. You can still see the sculpture garden. The two paintings that I talked about are still there, one in a cabinet and one in the next room. But most of the places where I did the walk are now just spaces floating in the air. The narrative was inspired by the theme of the show, that of artists' being influenced by museum practice and the ideas of collecting.

- STARTING POINT Looking at Charles Willson Peale's painting. The Artist in His Museum *sound of footsteps walking around on wood floor*
- OLDER MAN Come in.
- JANET He holds back the curtain to show me his collection – dead animals, birds, pieces of pottery. I walk into the room, it smells musty. *sound of walking in room*
- OLDER MAN I have a lock of hair from a woman in the 13th century.
- JANET It's the color of mine.
- OLDER MAN Yes it is. I will show you maps of the stars drawn by an angel. *music box, siren ... sound of museum*
[...]
- JANET *whispering* The guard is singing. *sound of singing guard* Try to follow the sound of my footsteps so that we can stay together.
- JANET The floor tiles look like clouds, it's like I'm floating when I walk. We're going to go upstairs.
- JANET What do I collect? Pieces of conversations, the sunlight on my kitchen table, the feel of his fingers touching my hair, the smell of my dog's fur.
- JANET Let's go up the escalator, to the second floor. It's a nice view of the garden from here. I can see two women sitting, talking to each other by the fountain, another person is reading a book smoking a cigarette.
[...]
- JANET Let's go on. Turn to the right. I really like this section of small paintings in front of us, especially the ones on the opposite wall. Stop by the Frida Kahlo, the self portrait with her sitting on a chair in a man's suit.
sound of someone cutting your hair, walking around you
- JANET I cut my hair short because it was becoming too precious. Because I wanted to test his love. *audio guide heard about Frida Kahlo ... the song "I don't love you anymore" mixes into conversation of person next to you saying,*
- ANON MAN All you really want is respect
- JANET There's a man next to me looking at the painting. Little white hairs on his neck, and at his temples, wrinkles around his eyes. Now he's looking at me. Let's go into the next room.

In Real Time, Video walk, 18 minutes.
Curated by Madeleine Grynstejn
for the 53rd Carnegie International at
Carnegie Library, Carnegie Museum
of Art, Pittsburgh, USA (1999)

In Real Time

I was sitting in the living room with the video camera taping as George and I were having coffee, moving the camera around the room. Then I replayed it and found myself unconsciously following the pan of the recorded shot and being disconcerted when George, having gotten up, wasn't in the shot where he was supposed to be. I realized that it was the same kind of strange situation as the telescope pieces we had done where the architecture remains the same but the people and cars change. The viewer becomes like the robotic head of the telescope moving to align the prerecorded video to the physical world. When Madeleine Grynstejn invited me to do an audio walk for the Carnegie I suggested that I try a new format, a video walk. It was a complete experiment but it opened up the walks to a whole new discourse and level of experimentation for us. The story became a narrative using the idea of the audience/participant as a 'rat' in a maze, testing the limits of reality.→

opening on camera is a tracking shot of pipes in basement ceiling, ominous music

JANET Perhaps if I show you what I have seen you can help me understand. I don't know why they sent me. I'm not very strong or brave. I guess I'm expendable though.

image of man (Doctor) in white lab coat sitting in a dark room comes up onto the screen, his voice is recorded as if it is heard off the camera

DOCTOR It's time for us to get started. Tell me what you see.

pan around library room

JANET I'm in Pittsburgh. It's 1999. I'm on the main floor of the Carnegie Library built in 1895 in the neo-classical style.

JANET Get up. Watch the screen. Follow me. I'm walking through the main holding center towards the exit.

[...]

daytime. walk into the big hall filled with library tables. then the shot changes to a night scene lit by desk lamps. the sound is of a priest reading mass

JANET It's night. Everyone has left. Walk to the right.

JANET *whispered* In the back of the truck I see a mound of fur and legs, two dead deer and a fox. The blood is matted in the fox's hair ... the eyes of the deer are still open.

walk past card catalog and the room dissolves to daylight shot again.

Someone runs by camera just as it goes into stacks, hear voices coming from the offices ...

- DOCTOR'S VOICE There's a woman walking in front of you.
- JANET No, that was the last time. There's a man with a white shirt and suspenders now.
- JANET Turn right into the stacks. I like the smell here. Somewhere amongst this labyrinth of stories there is a book that I need to find. They told me someone would be here to give it to me. *pass someone standing in stack reading book, he puts it back on the shelf. you reach for it, look at it then put book back on shelf*
- JANET Constantinople. I'm going to sit down to look at it. Sit down on one of these seats.
- JANET I remember seeing a giant emerald, riding on the ferry to Asia, smoke, and the smell of fish. *shot of taking book and then sitting down and opens book*
- JANET Just black letters on a white page. I was expecting something more.
[...]
- DOCTOR'S VOICE In a maze of this type the pattern is provided by the particular sequences of right and left turns required of the animal before it is permitted to reach the goal.
- JANET Turn to the left then walk straight.

Janet came out on March 11, 1999, a year and a half before the Carnegie International. She brought her own camera and the first thing that I watched her do was spatially test the place, which made me recognize that she is fundamentally a sculptor. She works with volume as well as sound. Then when she came to produce the piece, we set her and George up in an office, and they actually produced the piece there. You can't imagine anything more site-specific or, as I say, system-specific.↵ What's interesting about working with Janet is that, to my delight, she works with what's at hand.

She likes to work with the people who work there, with their children, their friends, and so on. Not only is she focused on the site architecturally, she is also interested in its human dimension. The people who ended up in *In Real Time* were the curatorial assistant on the project and our registrar, which inspired loyalty amongst everyone to the project, though I don't think that was her strategic intention. The sound that Janet was often very interested in was literally local. She's interested in sound in general, but within that she allows for the indigenous sound to appear.↵

Waterside Walk

Waterside Walk, Audio walk, 5 minutes, 45 seconds. Curated by Susie Allen of Artwise for British Airways, Waterside. Harmondsworth, England. Collection of British Airways (1999).

The British Airways building was designed as a type of village with theme sectors that reflected all of the places where the airline flies. There is the Africa house, Asia house, and house of the Americas, all of which I found very sci-fi and utopian. It was also built on the site of an historic village. The archaeologists had found lots of interesting debris while excavating for the building, which inspired the main narrative. Also, at the same time I read a fictional story, written in the late 1800s, about London being awash in water. So the three elements combined in this piece to form a loose narrative of a woman in one dimension looking for her mother in another. →

PA MECH. VOICE SYSTEM All new arrivals please report to station 8. Tolerance is a virtue. *sfx of running water in fake stream beside bench*

JANET Sometimes sitting beside a stream or a river I think I hear voices, words formed by the changes in the current.

JANET I'm looking for someone. I know she'll eventually return here.

JANET Walk past the fountain, down the stairs and into the square. The security guards are watching us from the tower. *scary music and then a voice from movie says*

VOICE Alright, you ain't gonna escape.

- PA MECH. VOICE SYSTEM All personnel in Africa House please report to Station 10. A good beginning is half the work. A work well-begun is half done.
- JANET There are a lot of people on the bridge, little shops, with advertising banners hanging down, wooden structures with people living in them. Kids running across.
- OLDER WOMAN I carried you in my arms, making the trip into the city by foot. The cars had been abandoned. Heaps of metal beside the road. There was only enough room in the boats for the children. I remember your fingers grasping at my face, your open mouth screaming.
[...]
- MAN'S VOX *reading in film noir-type voice* "You might find these interesting," he says as he drops the package onto my desk. A stack of handwritten letters, individually wrapped in clear plastic envelopes. Water has gotten into some of them and the writing is blurred. They've been found in the river over the last six months, he tells me. I unwrap the top one carefully and look over it. A fine, old-fashioned handwriting. I glance up at the date; June 15, 2011. "Ha, some kind of practical joke" ... I look up at him. He's not smiling ... "Just look them over and tell us what you think he says."

From the very first moment of her walk in Münster, I became both haunted and intrigued by Janet Cardiff's work. I was determined to find a project that she would find stimulating and want to do with us at Artwise. At the time we were working on a very challenging program for British Airways at their new headquarters near Heathrow Airport at Waterside. It was the only building in the first new park to be built in the London region since Victorian times. It is an extensive and hilly moorland park with streams, wildflowers, and two lakes attracting wildlife, especially birds. The widely acclaimed Waterside building was designed by the Norwegian architect, Niels Thorp, and built around the concept of an indoor street. It was paved with reclaimed cobble stones, lined with trees, cafes and seating areas, and included a small supermarket, a bank and, of course, a travel center. It was one of the first attempts at embracing the concept of "hot desking," which means that employees are not bound to a desk and instead carry their laptops and phones to wherever they need to be or are comfortable.→ Janet and I first met at Heathrow and we had arranged to take her straight to Waterside so she could see the building in daylight. She liked the site and cathedral-like aspects of the interior street.

The *Waterside Walk* takes participants along the street to a pavement cafe, up a lift and across a bridge to a crow's nest high above the busy street. During World War II the area was used as a camp for the Canadian Air Force, and there is even a memorial in the park commemorating the dead that Janet weaves into her story. Layered sounds create a fragmented narrative that evokes imagined histories and memories, a past, a present, and a future. It is composed from snippets of conversation recorded on site, samples of choral music sung by the people who work there and their children, as well as the sounds of war, and Janet's inimitable voice. The most notable element in the legacy of Janet's work with the building and the walk is the British Airways Choir. Following from her observations about cathedral-like qualities of the street, she sent a message through the company asking for singers. It generated a sense of pride about the walk amongst the workers. A year later I visited the building around Christmas time to discover a quite substantial choir singing in the street to an enthralled audience watching and listening from the cafes, bridges and walkways. It was quite magical and I think Janet would be amused and happy at what her *Waterside Walk* had seeded.→

The Missing Voice: Case Study B

The Missing Voice: Case Study B, Audio walk, 50 minutes. Commissioned and produced by Artangel, Whitechapel Library to Liverpool Street Station. London, UK (1999)

Sometimes I don't really know what the stories in my walks are about. Mostly they are a response to the location, almost as if the site were a Rorschach test that I am interpreting. For me, *The Missing Voice* was partly a response to living in a large city like London for a while, reading about its history in quiet libraries, seeing newspaper headlines as I walked by the new stands, overhearing gossip, and being a solitary person lost amongst the masses. Normally, I live in a small town in Canada, so the London experience enhanced the paranoia that I think is common to a lot of people, especially women, as they adjust to a strange city. I was trying to relate to the listener the stream-of-consciousness scenarios that I constantly invent in my mind when I see someone pass or walk down a dark alley. It is one of my frustrations as well as entertainments to constantly have these visions and voices, which are quite often scary or violent, running through my brain as I encounter the simplest of realities. I think it is a desire to dramatize my life, make it real by making it cinematic – probably the result of reading too many detective novels or watching too many movies. Part of the process for the piece was to walk around and take notes on my mini voice recorder. While listening to these notes again in my apartment I realized how this voice became another woman, a character different from myself, a companion of sorts. This voice also seemed to metaphorically represent how we all have multiple personalities and voices. I saw the woman in the story not only as alienated from her self, but also searching for herself through this voice, play-acting, creating false dangers and love affairs, wanting her story dramatized. At the same time, her voiceover, the one that speaks in the third person, removes her from the story, and keeps her at a safe distance. –

sound of phone ringing, receptionist answering

JANET I'm standing in the library with you, you can hear the turning of newspaper pages, people talking softly. There's a man standing beside me, he's looking in the crime section now. He reaches to pick up a book, opens it, leafs through a few pages and puts it back on the shelf. He's wandering off to the right. Pick up the book he looked at ... it's on the third shelf down. It's called *Dreams of Darkness*, by Reginald Hill. I'm opening it to page 88. 'She set off back at a brisk pace in a rutted and muddy lane, about a furlong from the house she thought she heard a sound ahead of her. She paused. She could hear nothing but her straining eyes caught a movement in the gloom. Someone was approaching. A foot splashed in a puddle.'

scary movie music rises during excerpt from book, girl screams, music fades out

JANET Sometimes when you read things it seems like you're remembering them. Close the book. Put it back to where you found it. Go to the right. Walk past the main desk. Through the turnstile.

sound of voices, conversations

DETECTIVE *Man's Voice, British accent* One of the librarians recognized her from the photograph.

[...]

siren passes

JANET Turn to the right, Gunthorpe Street. A man just went into the side door of the pub.

sound of tape recorder being stopped, rewound, replayed

JANET *recorded voice* A man just went into the side door of the pub.

sfx of recorder being stopped

JANET I've a long red haired wig on now. I look like the woman in the picture. If he sees me now he'll recognize me.

DETECTIVE Found in her bag, two cassette tapes with a receipt and a tape recorder ... As far as I can tell she's mapping different paths through the city. I can't seem to find a reason for the things she notices and records.

J VOX *recorded* A naked man is walking up the street towards me. He's walking as if he is sleeping, staring straight ahead. He walks past me without seeing me. *sound of recorded being stopped*

[...]

JANET I dreamt last night that I was a soldier in a war who was sleeping, dreaming a nightmare through his dream, I dreamt of a giant, white polar bear covered in blood, chasing him down a gravel road. He dreamt of a tea bag already spent, soaking in clear water. He dreamt of flying over a vast forest. *street sounds resume*

[...]

DETECTIVE Inside the package a wig, beige scarf, a linen suit, and leather shoes.

JANET Go down the stairs. I keep thinking the package that I sent to him, it was a sign to tell him that she didn't exist, that it was over, but I have a sick feeling that somehow it has something to do with her death. Keep going in the same direction.

DETECTIVE I've started listening to her tapes at night in a darkened room. In the morning I set her picture across from me, while I eat my breakfast.

[...]

JANET She's getting on the train. He runs along the platform. Just as it's pulling out of the station, she sees his face in the window and tries to hide. As the train picks up speed, she turns her head to watch him fade into the distance. I have to leave now. I wanted to walk you back to the library but there's not enough time. Please return the Discman as soon as possible. Goodbye. *sound of Janet walking away*

In the city, you are in the company of strangers. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century in Berlin, Georg Simmel identified this phenomenon as a central experience of the modern metropolis. “The stranger is near and far at the same time,” Simmel noted, “one who is close-by is remote [but] one who is remote is near.” London was not a city Janet Cardiff knew well when she arrived in January 1998 to think about a possible work. *The Missing Voice* is Cardiff’s first work for a large modern metropolis. It is a work for a city where everyone is a stranger – a city where people come to lose themselves, or find themselves; a place where people go missing every day.↵ The way Artangel develops projects is very open, so there was a bewildering range of possibilities for Cardiff to consider. Perhaps the most crucial issues were how and where the work would begin and end. Starting in the Crime section of the Whitechapel Library, *The Missing Voice* winds its way through the streets of Spitalfields and into the bustling spaces of the City of London. It ends, quite abruptly, leaving the listener alone amongst the crowd, in the public concourse of Liverpool Street Station. Large numbers of people rush by or wait. The listener is asked to head back to the library, this time without the companionship of the voice guiding his or her steps. The question of how to end her narratives is always a complex one for Cardiff, and the ending of *The Missing Voice* marks a particularly brave and open resolution.↵ One aspect of the work which we frequently discussed was its duration. We were both interested to see what might be possible if the length of the experience could be extended. It was not, as the walks at the Louisiana Museum or in Münster or São Paolo had been, part of a large exhibition or connected to a museum. It would be out there, in the city, on its own. When the editing was complete, *The Missing Voice* was significantly

longer than any walk Cardiff had previously completed. This allowed for different layers of narrative to unfold and for the city itself to become a central character. The female narrator is featured in two guises – as a voice guiding you through the present, and as a recording that recounts personal and civic traumas. The tape of the recording is now in the hands of somebody else, a detective trying to reconstruct the missing person’s movements and her motives. A male voice occasionally emerges – perhaps the lover of the narrator? Who has gone missing, and why? Is she really missing or has she deliberately disappeared? Did we see her rushing by? The various voices entangle with the city through which Cardiff’s walk takes us – a city which, as the narrator tells us, “is infinite. No-one has ever found an end to the pattern of streets.”↵ Near the end of the editing phase, which took several weeks, I had some concern that some of the particular details the narrator was describing would not be there for very long. When the work was ready, I realized this was not an issue. Conceived for, made for, and experienced within a particular part of a particular city, Janet Cardiff’s walks paradoxically thrive on the disjuncture between what is being heard or described and what is being seen. After five years and some 20,000 other participants, I just borrowed *The Missing Voice* from Whitechapel Library again. The disjunctures have become gradually more pronounced, but the work holds together just as well. I wonder now what the experience of the work will be like in a hundred years’ time. There will be no library, no lime green Ford Capri, maybe there will be no railway station. Perhaps the station will, as the recorded voice describes, be “empty ... blackness and rubble everywhere ... holes in the glass roof.” But I imagine the city will still be there, full of strangers. And the desire to disappear will be there too.↵

A Large Slow River

A Large Slow River, Audio walk, 18 minutes. Curated by Marnie Fleming at Gairloch Gardens, Oakville Galleries. Ontario, Canada (2000). Collection of Oakville Galleries.

A Large Slow River has a beautiful site. It is set on Lake Ontario, with the waves hitting the rocks all day. Water was a major element in this walk. While working on the script, I was writing a fictional account of a man slipping at the top of a waterfall and falling to his death. I decided one Sunday while working on it that I needed to go to record the sound effects for the waterfall so we drove for over an hour to Waterton National Park in Alberta, just north of the Montana border. When we got to the small town where the waterfall was located, we decided to have lunch. Just as we were finishing lunch, I said to George that we had to get going, he had to hurry up. I was really impatient and intense. So we left the restaurant in a hurry and drove the two blocks to the waterfall. Just as we arrived at the site, 3 young people were walking slowly across the top of the 40-meter waterfall on a log that had become lodged above it. Everyone was watching this scene and thinking that the kids were crazy. It was a very dangerous thing to do. They all got across safely and the audience at the bottom was shaking their heads at the craziness of youth. I started to set up my recording gear in the van. As I was doing this, one kid who was still up above realized that he had made an impression on the audience below so he started dancing on the rocks at the top of the falls. Just as I was all set up and pressed the button to record I heard screams and yelling. I turned around to see that the boy had slipped off the rock and plunged the forty meters to the bottom. One of the strangest things is the way George looked at me at that moment and said 'how did you know?' as if I had caused it. It took two teams of mountain climbers 3 days to get the boy's body out from between the rocks where it had become stuck. No one had fallen or died at this

waterfall since the late '60s. I still wonder why it happened at that moment. I have a recording sitting on a shelf in my studio of the boy's girlfriend crying, screaming crowds, men yelling instructions about getting ropes, and the sound of the sirens with the ambulance arriving. The crash of the waterfall is behind all of this like white noise. I never did use that part of the script or any of the recordings from that day.→

*sound of empty house, Janet
saying 'hello, hello'*

JANET I wander through the house, looking in room after room. All there is is emptiness, plaster on the floor, broken windows.

JANET Hello. *close up*

GEORGE *on voice recorder* I hear her calling but I can't seem to make a sound. Time moves around me like a large slow river.
sound of machine clicks

JANET It didn't work. We're back in the gallery. I have to try it again. Turn around, let's go outside.
[...]

sound of crickets

MAN VR It's night. I'm walking by the pond. There's a light on in the attic of the house. I can see it reflected in the water. Walk between the fenced area and the metal structure.

JANET Walk between the fenced area and the metal structure. The sun is coming out. Seagulls are perched on the walls.

JANET I'm going to sit down for a minute on the middle bench to the left. You can smell the lake now, that smell of fish and algae. Sit down.

JANET I'm at a beach on Lake Huron, my toes squishing into the mud, feeling them disappear deeper as each wave washes over them, jumping off my father's wet shoulders into the water. Now I'm at another beach, it's night, the sound of the waves coming in through the screen windows.

In 2000, Oakville Galleries commissioned Janet Cardiff to create an audio walk in Gairloch Gardens in Oakville, Canada. The walk, now a part of our permanent collection, takes place on an 11-acre estate on the edge of Lake Ontario. This idyllic park setting includes Gairloch Gallery, a rose garden, a couple of ponds – one with a wooden bridge – a swan pen, a sculpture garden, a teahouse, and stone breakwater along the waterfront. Geese, swans, ducks, children, dogs, seniors, tourists, and bridal parties are common sights.³ The route begins in the gallery. Janet’s voice in the headset resounds: “Hello, hello [...] all there is emptiness, plaster on the floor, broken windows ...” We hear her thoughts as we are led out of the creaking gallery doors into the garden, and they become intermingled with a man’s tape-recorded voice recalling a wartime era. It is in this interchange that we find Janet circling around some of the same themes as in her previous walks – memories, displacement, and desire. Like a Beckett novel, her scripts have trouble with resolutions. Disconnected thoughts, sounds, conversations, and events are strung together in a sequence that suggests mystery; a world not empty of meaning, but, perhaps, too full of it. Sometimes we listen with great tenderness to the internal and external conversations of the two principal characters (Janet’s own voice and that of a man) and then are temporally dislocated again. Gairloch Gardens oscillates from being a gentle park to being a place that has the potential for tragedy. So, too, she frames analogies, overlaps subtexts, and

employs multiple sounds: an organ grinder, opera singers, children’s voices, sirens, geese, buzzing flies, flying bullets, and helicopters. Often her characters leave their words hanging – weightless and somber, full of density and gravity. Janet, in effect, has created a virtual space anchored in reality.⁴ Janet overlays her observations of time with the time we experience performing the audio walk. For example, in the CD she recalls a previous visit to the gardens and we hear her say, “[...] there were petunias and marigolds. Now it is just overturned dirt.” What we may in fact be seeing and experiencing at this juncture are daffodils, and, quite possibly, as the season unfolds, petunias and marigolds, and then perhaps dirt. We are made acutely aware of the transformative processes of real time.⁵ The fluidity between the imaginary and the real finds a visual counterpart in the ebb and flow of water sounds and the artist’s unremitting reference to aqueous things: a beach, pond, creek, lake, mist, and rain. The flow of water – Janet’s spoken references and the actual sound of it – is used as a metaphor throughout and also assists in directing us to free-floating thoughts. The sound of waves seems to wash through us and act as a trigger for memory. Janet shares a few of her own – as we simultaneously hear the in-and-out lulling of waves – which may or may not be in synch with the waves we actually see. In turn, we intervene with our own memories, which can lead to reflection or even reinvention. The watery imagery is just another example of how Janet prompts acts of imagination that return to us the ability to identify and creatively associate.³⁻⁷

MARNIE FLEMING

³ The above text is excerpted from MARNIE FLEMING’s catalog essay, *A Large Slow River*, and appears here courtesy of Oakville Galleries.

Taking Pictures, Audio walk with photographs, 16 minutes. Curated by Rochelle Steiner for the group exhibition *Wonderland* at Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, Missouri, USA (2000).
Collection of Saint Louis Art Museum.

Taking Pictures

The use of photographs in St. Louis came out of the Carnegie video walk. I was interested in how I could transform the feeling of a summer forest with photographs taken from the site in the winter. The script was very much about the layering of time and how memories change things. During one of the research trips, my mother happened to be in the city on a bus tour, so she became part of the piece.→

JANET I remember when I was here before, in the fall, sightseeing with my mother. I brought my camera with me to remind myself of our visit. I noticed as we walked along that she had trouble keeping up with me, that she was out of breath.

JANET Stop. Look at the next photo. Number 2. Hold it up. Move your eyes back and forth from one reality to another. The leaves are different on the tree at the right. In the photo they're red. The grass is brown. Someone's getting out of a car. *sound of camera clicking, fade to silence behind voice*

JANET I flip through the photographs looking for a picture of my mother on that trip. But there isn't any. She was always standing outside the frame. *siren, sound of dog and owner walking by*

JANET Let's go on. Keep following the path into the forest.

Janet Cardiff's work for the Saint Louis Art Museum was commissioned as part of *Wonderland*, a group exhibition in 2000 that included ten artists whose art transforms space – whether architectural, formal, social, or psychological. Her walk, *Taking Pictures*, began in the Museum's Sculpture Hall, a grand space created for the 1904 World's Fair. I remember Janet pacing the room to check the timing of the walk: the echoes of her footsteps, along with those of her voice, were accentuated in the cavernous space. At the time she was preparing *Taking Pictures*, she was also working on *40-Part Motet*, and the idea of sound originating from different points in space was central to her thinking. \neg *Taking Pictures* led visitors on a route from the museum into the surrounding Forest Park, to an existing but little known wooded path hidden within a forested section of the park. Atelier van Lieshout's work

for *Wonderland*, *Pioneer Set* (2000) – a self-sufficient 'farm' with farmhouse, chicken coop, shed, vegetable garden, and live animals – was located in the vicinity of her route. \neg *Taking Pictures*, like many of Janet's walks, employs recollections, and this was the first time she used still photographs as a device to convey a sense of both history and memory. Four years later, I still recall the sound of the rustle of leaves, a plane overhead, a photograph of a bathtub, and a bench in the woods. I also remember Janet and George recording the piece, arriving with their multiple cases of equipment, taking over a spare office in the museum, walking with the 'blue head' they use to record. \neg The public response to the piece was fantastic. One visitor said that he got completely lost but was nonetheless mesmerized by the sound and her voice and the way she transformed the surroundings. \neg

ROCHELLE STEINER

The Telephone Call

The Telephone Call, Video walk, 15 minutes, 20 seconds. Curated by John S. Weber together with Aaron Betsky, Janet Bishop, Kathleen Forde, Adrienne Gagnon, and Benjamin Weil, 010101: *Art in Technological Times* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA (2001). Collection of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,

This is the only time I've produced a second piece for a museum. The first one, the audio walk from 1997, used the structure of the building as a memory map. This one, a video walk, created a narrative that involved interactions with people in the space, but still used the architecture as a baseline. The basis of the narrative was about how our minds invent scenarios from chance meetings between people. The piece was largely about self-induced anxieties and how the fears we have change our perception of our world. –

hear woman in front of you talking about her fear of frogs. I can't go into Chinatown even in case I see a store selling frog legs ...

JANET Batrachophobia ... Frogs in my soup. Frogs in my bed, crawling up my legs. Frogs falling from the sky ... What am I afraid of?

the audio shifts to scary music as I say these things image shifts to an apartment, walking down a hallway, look through doorway and see a woman in a black slip on the bed, sound of cell phone rings beside you, sound of getting telephone out of bag, visuals go back to that of museum in front of you

JANET Hello,

BERNARD What are you thinking about?

JANET Who is this?

BERNARD What do you mean? I'm sitting right beside you.

JANET We have to go now. Point the camera where I'm pointing it. Synchronize your movements with mine. Stand up. Walk to the right. Follow this woman. Go behind the stairs. Now walk past her.

Janet Cardiff's video walk, *The Telephone Call*, opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on March 1, 2001, as part of *010101, Art in Technological Times*, an exhibition about the intersection of art and new technologies. The piece leads visitors through the museum on a meandering tour up the central staircase, taking them briefly into a nearby gallery, and then into a service stair normally off limits to visitors. Cardiff's voice muses on the people she is seeing and the overheard conversations and encounters around her. Layers of real and recorded sound overlap, creating a rich and ambiguous sense of space. A man calls. In the bleak service stairwell, the tour pauses and the camera goes black. Ominous footsteps approach from behind in the stairwell. Alone and convinced they're in the wrong place, visitors wait, hearts racing. As one visitor put it, "I thought someone was going to kill me on the stairs. Brilliant." The walk concludes with a stroll over the fifth floor bridge high above the museum's atrium, closing with a view out to the west hills of San Francisco. ↪ To someone who hasn't taken one, it is impossible to explain the bizarrely intense sensation of psychological immersion created by Cardiff's video walks. They engender a sense of trance-like disorientation that is unlike anything else in contemporary art, and not remotely comparable to the experience of cinema. In an unpublished video interview done while Cardiff was working on the piece at SFMOMA, she compared her audio and video walks, noting that audio has "this way of fluidly moving and entering the person's body in a subversive way." The video walks possess that quality, too, but in video walks, "the world becomes this weird, amorphous thing that's not really there ... it's like an alternate reality, like you're going into

a different dimension. I was surprised at how much it puts you into a trance afterward. The reason is that your brain is concentrating so much on trying to line up the reality that is the video image with the reality that's outside." At the same time, she pitches her voice in a very particular way, "like a thinking voice, like it is going right into your brain, and I think that way of speaking is very hypnotic." Carefully following the image around the museum, listening to Cardiff's voice, people are suspended between Janet's invented world and the real world. When the invented world suddenly stops, it's disconcerting, and more than a bit strange. ↪ Cardiff closed *The Telephone Call* by saying, "Goodbye." In that moment it felt like you'd just been kicked out of her brain, or that she'd left yours after a brief but exquisite mind-meld that the artist describes as "a bit of a merging of two people." The tour created a sense of human connection that was palpable, and in its wake came feelings of abandonment, fascination, and intense gratitude. Visitors also frequently described a sense of pleasant insecurity as to whether the piece was in fact really over when the video stopped. They described thinking and hoping that everyone around them – who had, of course, just been absorbed into Cardiff's theater – might still have lines to speak and roles to play. In nearly two decades of curating, I have never seen anything like the kind of intoxicated audience response *The Telephone Call* generated. ↪ There are a number of things one could talk about here beyond the sheer level of enthusiasm for *The Telephone Call*, but what I want to single out briefly is the unusual intimacy it establishes. Again and again, people who took *The Telephone Call* at SFMOMA described their experience in virtually sexual terms: a mingling of bodies;

the feeling of being “in” someone and having someone inside them; a sense of unusually close psychological and physical communion with another person. A number of visitors observed that they needed to cry in the elevator after finishing the piece. Needless to say, these are not the terms in which people normally describe their experiences of visual art. Yet in

another sense, Cardiff’s work succeeds precisely in doing what much art claims to offer but fails to deliver: a view into another’s brain and body – a way to see, hear, and seemingly feel (through the motion of the body in space) another person’s reality. That Cardiff achieves this through the highly mediated experience of recorded audio and a tiny video image makes the user’s experience all the more unexpected and therefore psychologically overwhelming.↵

JOHN WEBER

P. S. 1 Walk, Audio walk, 10 minutes, 38 seconds. Curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev for *Janet Cardiff. A Survey of Works including Collaborations with George Bures Miller*. P. S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Queens, New York, USA (2001)

P. S. 1 Walk

George and I produced this walk during the installation of a major survey show at the P. S. 1 Contemporary Art Museum in New York just after 9/11. It was a very strange, intense time. The walk was a reflection of the various things that happened while we were installing the show, like meeting a jazz singer, Queen Ester, who I hired to sing *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, overhearing conversations in restaurants, and recording the P. S. 1 guards doing their special in-house language and their rapping as they waited out the long hours in the museum hallways. But one very strange element was a message left on Carolyn’s home phone machine that became a kind of central keystone for the piece. Definitely a wrong number.↵

*sfx of recording from Carolyn's machine:
 'Hey Bitch ... you better stop messin'
 with my husband or I'll kill you.' ...
 sfx of scary music as you go downstairs*

JANET Let's look out this window. There he is ... getting out of his car. Now he's coming towards the building.

Let's keep going down the stairs ... and down again.

JANET Now go behind the stairs. Here it is. This is the place. Sit down and wait ... Close your eyes. *sound of fly then crickets*

fade up

JANET It was night. I was walking from the barn to the house. I remember seeing giant fireflies bobbing up and down in the darkness of the fields. I stopped and watched and realized it was only the head lamps on the immigrant workers as they picked worms from the dirt. Why am I thinking of this right now ... *sound*

*of man walking into stairwell above you.
 slowly coming downstairs towards you
 then footsteps come right up beside you*

JANET Shssh. *whispering* Let's go. To the right then up the stairs ... *breathing hard* ... cross over the stairwell and go to the right, out into the hallway. Walk straight ahead, down the hallway ...

JANET This morning there was a group of about 20 men standing outside the building. As I walked through them my heart started to beat really fast. I held my breath and tried to concentrate on moving my legs, one step after another while ignoring the men as if they were all invisible.

Ittingen Walk

Ittingen Walk, Audio walk, 20 minutes.

Curated by Markus Landert at Kunstmuseum des Kantons Thurgau, Warth, Switzerland (2002). Collection of Kunstmuseum des Kantons Thurgau.

The heritage of silence was very strong at the Kartause Ittingen historical museum. It is easy to imagine the life of the monks there, the isolation, and the intensity of the cold stone floors and sparse rooms. I decided to work with the heaviness of silence, using as a narrative thread the idea of a man in an apartment alone after a lover has left.→

JANET There's a small door to our right here. Go through it and close the door behind you. It's always so nice and quiet in this room. Look into the mirror. You can see the outdoors, the other world. Now there's two windows, two kitchens, two coffee makers and two of you. Isn't it funny that the only way to see yourself is by looking into another world.

MAN / GEORGE When you're suddenly alone in a house the silence suffocates you like a thick blanket.

JANET Just leave me alone he said. So here I am in Switzerland and he's in Berlin. That should be far enough away.

GEORGE The sound of my hand on the blanket, the sound of water running in the sink, the sound of my throat swallowing. *sound of Latin being read from next room*

JANET Let's go through the next door. *whispering* Close the door behind us. Stop. Listen. *still whispering* Let's go on, out to the hallway. Turn right.

GEORGE The sound of a single fork falling onto the table.

JANET It must have been cold to live here in the winter. Imagine bare feet on these cold stones.

GEORGE The sound of my memories inside my head.

JANET I can see my shadow against the wall, walking with me. There's a doorway to the right, into the monk's cell. Let's go in there. *sound of footsteps walking down stairs and past you*

GEORGE The sound of my fingers touching my face.

There's a lot going on around me in the museum shop. The telephone is ringing. Visitors are leafing through books and chatting to each other. The sales staff are giving out information and discussing the articles for sale. Suddenly she speaks to me: my mysterious guide. "Do you ever feel invisible? Like you've fallen through a hole in time and no one can see you anymore?" She seems to be standing right behind me, invisible to everyone else. "I'm going into the museum. I'd like you to walk with me." With these words of invitation she leads me out into the cool corridor. ↪ We walk together. She keeps very close to me. "I'm glad you're walking with me. This place is full of ghosts." She strides on purposefully, going down a few steps into the Fehr Room, named after the family that lived for centuries in these prestigious premises following the dissolution of the monastery. She shows me a photograph hanging on the wall. There they are, the Fehrs, eating a meal in the cloister garth – an idyllic scene from a time long past. ↪ We go through a door. We are standing inside a space that has been partitioned off. Folded tables clutter up the small space; a coffee maker stands in front of a large mirror. It is a narrow space, a bit shabby. So even a museum has its in-between spaces, small hidden corners that aren't meant for public viewing. Here, the impression of the past so carefully produced in the museum rooms reveals itself to be an illusion, a backdrop. ↪ A man talks about being alone, about what it's like when silence becomes oppressive, when the smallest noise takes on meaning. But we go on into the refectory, the monks' lavishly furnished dining room. On the wall hang pictures of important Carthusian monks such as St. Bruno of Cologne, who founded

the order, or St. Hugo of Grenoble, his patron and sponsor. On the paneling there are pictures of hermits; they too are important role models for the monks sitting around the dining tables. They do not talk while they eat. Carthusian monks take a strict vow of silence when they enter the monastery. Only once a week do they allow themselves to speak. One of the monks reads a passage from a book, in Latin. I don't understand a word, and my guide, whispering, urges me to leave the room, to go out into the cloister. What is the man saying? "The sound of my memories inside my head." Who is this mysterious person talking about loneliness, silence, memory, and longing? Is he a monk, or my guide's lover? Perhaps even my alter ego? ↪ In the cloister it smells slightly musty. On the ground, red bricks have taken the place of sandstone slabs. The homemade bricks were probably cheaper than the thick paving stones from the quarry, here in this wide cloister that connects the separate living quarters of fifteen monks. Now we meet the monks again. They go past us, singing. The sun is shining. The light is pleasant, soft. "I can see my shadow against the wall, walking with me," my guide says. She can see her shadow? And where's mine? Has she stolen my shadow, like the devil did to Peter Schlemihl? I see only one shadow. We enter a monk's cell. I look out of the window; I hear an airplane, but there's nothing to be seen. Nor does the monk I hear coming down the stairs from the attic actually walk through the door. "What is real? What isn't? Where am I?" I wonder, and pull the headphones off. It's all still there: the monk's cell with its table, bed, and crucifix; seemingly untouched, as if the monk left only yesterday. I am back solidly in the museum that was opened to the public some twenty

4 The Carthusian monastery in Ittingen was relatively small, with no more than 15 monks living there at any one time between 1461 and 1848, and has only minor historical significance. The most important event in its history is considered to be the Ittinger Sturm of 1524, when local farmers raided and set fire to the monastery buildings. The majority of what the monks reconstructed during the 17th and 18th centuries, however, has remained intact, with the result that the building complex provides authentic insight into everyday life in times long past and the elegant baroque culture of the Carthusian monks.

years ago.⁴— So I put the headset back on and follow my guide back out of the monk's cell and over to a bench in the cloister garth. She draws my attention to the Fehr family who are sitting beneath an apple tree eating a meal. In my mind's eye, I see the photograph we were looking at a few minutes ago. So that's what it was like back then. Then suddenly there's the sound of banging and crackling, fire and sirens, planes and horses. Violence shatters the idyll. Is this present-day war or the Ittinger Sturm of 1524? On the *Ittingen Walk* time shifts as much as space. — And on through the garden to the hidden back entrance to the museum cellar. We creep through a narrow, dark storage area into one of the museum exhibition rooms. "I read that the family used to grow mushrooms down here. Imagine how it must have smelt in the dark. Feet walking through earth." How different from the air-conditioned, brightly lit museum space and its exhibits we are presented with today! What a difference between imagination and reality, past and present. Then we

go upstairs, along passageways, around corners. I lose my bearings in the maze of rooms and have to rely completely on my guide. She leads me to a small, hidden partitioned area that is almost completely taken up by a filing cabinet with lots of empty drawers. I pull out one or two of them while listening to my guide. "All these empty drawers. They're like perfect little worlds. Little boxes of forgotten air. I just remembered a dream from last night. I was looking down a deep water well into darkness. A man was kissing me softly on the lips, then I woke up. Close the drawer. Now that dream is in there." An archive of dreams inside the monastery. — A view from the gallery into the monastery church with its cheerful stuccos and frescoes telling the story of St Bruno, then on through a labyrinth of rooms, down a small, steep staircase, along passageways and corridors, until finally we find ourselves inside the chapel choir. The monks walk past us, singing. They are leaving us. "I imagine them going to their rooms, the sound of their own bodies the only thing to keep them company. We have to go now too. Goodbye." — I sit alone in the church. My guide has disappeared as mysteriously as she appeared. She leaves me behind in a reality that has been enriched by this exceptional experience. For a brief time it was as if I was living in a film, or rather in a dream, and even after I have handed back the CD player at the desk, the world around me retains at least a trace of dreaminess and unreality following my walk through the monastery. I am left with an idea of the fragility and illusoriness of what we usually call reality, and an understanding of the power of the imagination.—

MARKUS LANDERT

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller,
Conspiracy Theory/Théorie du complot,
 Video walk, 16 minutes, 40 seconds.
 Curated by Réal Lussier for Janet Cardiff.
*A Survey of Works Including Collaborations
 with George Bures Miller*. Musée d'Art
 Contemporain de Montréal, Montreal,
 Quebec, Canada (2002). Collection of
 Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal.

Conspiracy Theory/Théorie du complot

It was fun doing this piece, hiring a band to reproduce a Becaud song, renting a replica gun, and simulating a car chase. I'm not sure what this narrative was about. I wanted it to be more of a stream-of-consciousness type of piece where you wander through a maze while different scenes unfold. We started it in the museum with a little girl showing you a picture of a dead man and ended it in the parking lot where the man in the photo runs by you escaping the sounds of a gunshot. →

opening camera screen blank

- JANET Last night I dreamt that I killed a man. It was in a hotel room, a single swift act that disappeared as quickly as it had come. But I couldn't stop the feeling of guilt about doing it. Even as my eyes opened to the morning light it was still with me.
- JANET You have a camera in your hand. Hold it up. Point the camera where I point it ... at the chair, the painting. Now move it to the left.

scene fades up camera follows words, looking at painting then pans left. little girl comes slowly upstairs staring into camera, carrying something. she gets closer and stands in front and then holds up a photo for you to see. it's a photo of a man lying on the ground. zoom into photo. image cuts to movement of video of man lying on ground in parking lot. woman turns to run. two-second shot, then quickly cut back to museum stairs from same viewpoint. woman walks past as camera image gets up, moves up to window

JANET Do you see the stairs in front of you, going up to the right. Get up. Follow the image on the screen. Walk where I walk so we can stay together. Go up to the landing. Stop here. Point the camera outside ... now over to the hotel. Zoom in. There's a figure in the window. *camera zooms into window. a figure is standing at window.*

cut to a scene inside the hotel room. the woman standing at the window turns and walks past the bed where a man is lying reading. camera image cuts back to outside of hotel windows then pans over to right

Conspiracy Theory is an audio and video walk commissioned and produced by the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal in conjunction with its exhibition, *Janet Cardiff. A Survey of Works Including Collaborations with George Bures Miller*, that was organized by the P. S. 1 Contemporary Art Center of New York. The museum is located in the heart of downtown Montréal and is part of an architectural com-

plex connected by an underground shopping concourse that includes two other buildings that house major theaters. The route of the walk begins on the second floor of the museum and proceeds down to the first floor and the ground level. It continues through a corridor that is usually reserved for employees, into the shopping concourse and an adjacent parking garage before returning to the concourse and one of the museum's entrances.→

RÉAL LUSSIER

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller,
Ghost Machine, Video walk, 27 minutes.
 Curated by Matthias Lilienthal. Hebbel
 Theater, Berlin, Germany (2005).
 English and German versions

Ghost Machine

The theatre was built in 1907 by Oskar Kaufmann and is a beautiful, intimate, old-fashioned place, with a maze of staircases and backrooms that normally a theater audience wouldn't be able to access. We decided to do a video walk using these spaces. One of the main elements of the story involved taking the participant up winding stairs and encountering a room covered in plastic as a parallel to a woman's journey to visit a man in an apartment. As in most of the walks, the narrative is not clear but there are hints that the man is hiding in the theater attic. In one scene, he gets arrested by police in historical costumes. The final scene is on the stage where, when you turn and see a whole audience watching, you realize that all along you have been part of a play.→

Jvox It was raining the night I went to see him. I had forgotten my umbrella and the water was running down my forehead into my eyes.

Jvox I remember the sound of my shoes hitting the stairs. A dog barked behind a door, a siren passed by outside. As I reached the door to his apartment I heard a woman laughing across the hallway and I stopped to listen. Then I heard the telephone ring. *sfx in background. telephone ringing sfx comes out of Wilson room*

Jvox Theres a door on the right. Go through it. It's heavy, push hard.

[...]

- 32 JANET Stop at the sign Bühne. The white arrow on the ground. I'm turning the camera back on again. Now open the door and walk to the left onto the stage.

enter to back stage

JANET Stop.

LARS *walking around stage* I dreamt that I was at a family reunion and my grandfather and grandmother were there. I started crying in the dream because I was so happy to see them. My grandmother came over and wanted to know what was wrong. She was so real. Her glasses, the texture of her skin. She gave me a big hug and said, don't worry everything will be alright. She didn't know that she was dead.

LARS Are you listening to me? Why aren't you listening to me? I can't hear you anymore.

no response from Jvox. Lars turns towards stage and camera follows. you see that there is a whole audience. piano starts playing, then singer who stands in the audience starts singing, camera moves past actor off stage and then down into audience, past singer. lights fade down, audience claps, actors bow on stage, camera goes to black. then image comes up to an empty stage. a stage technician comes onto it and starts to turn off all the lights then leaves through the back door

Jvox Just now an image flashed into my mind of millions of silver wires connecting the universe together. For a fraction of a second I thought I had glimpsed the answer to everything then just as quickly the image was gone. *camera fades to black*

During a video walk, participants watch a camera screen with images of their immediate surroundings arranged in a way that no longer pertains, while being addressed by an insistent voice. One might claim that a video walk is visual art, that it is theater, that it is a radio play, and that it is a movie. One could also assert that it is not theater, that it is not visual art, neither is it a film, nor a radio play. I don't know much about the actual production process, in part, because with Janet and George, one always has this sense of their symbiosis at work that seems to suggest that they try to keep everyone out of their little paradise.→ Janet demonstrated how a walk works with the minimal elements in their studio. She simply took the camera and made a course in the studio. When replaying those 30 seconds, you feel this irrepressible urge to preserve the camera's image of the surroundings. But beyond that, a difference begins to emerge between the recorded sequence and the events that were actually experienced. If the story that is partially told on the screen of the camera had been composed as a true story, then it would have killed the form or advanced ad absurdum. A closed narrative would have been detrimental. I think that the coincidences, like the overlap and divergence between the recorded event and what one experiences, are particularly interesting. A good example is when one views a room that is in the process of being renovated and then subsequently

walks through the freshly painted space. There were also concurrences amongst the visitors in the various levels of the Hebbel Theater. If someone were sitting above in the loge, then she could see the other visitors when they were going across the stage. Later, when that person from the loge arrived on the stage, invariably she remembered seeing the others from above and looked up at the loge, which then became an object on display in the moment. It is a very curious effect to drift into an utterly other world just by having two modes of perception completely captivated.→ The theater is a place that is intended for creating another world. It is a place where the actors can pretend that they are someone else and somewhere else than they are in reality. They can pretend that they're prepared to hurt themselves and then a discourse with the audience develops out of that. The camera is also a machine that reproduces images of reality which we then take for real, while the three-dimensionally recorded sound presents the sense of space from which the audio-visual experiences arise. Suddenly, Janet's voice or Sophie's (in the German version) is in your head. On one level, it is as if you are receiving instructions from dictation; simultaneously, you are psychedelically trapped by yourself. For me, the walk is above all a pretty illusory installation that becomes a meditation in which I completely lose the sense for what is virtual and what is real.→

MATTHIAS LILIENTHAL