Cover letter to the users

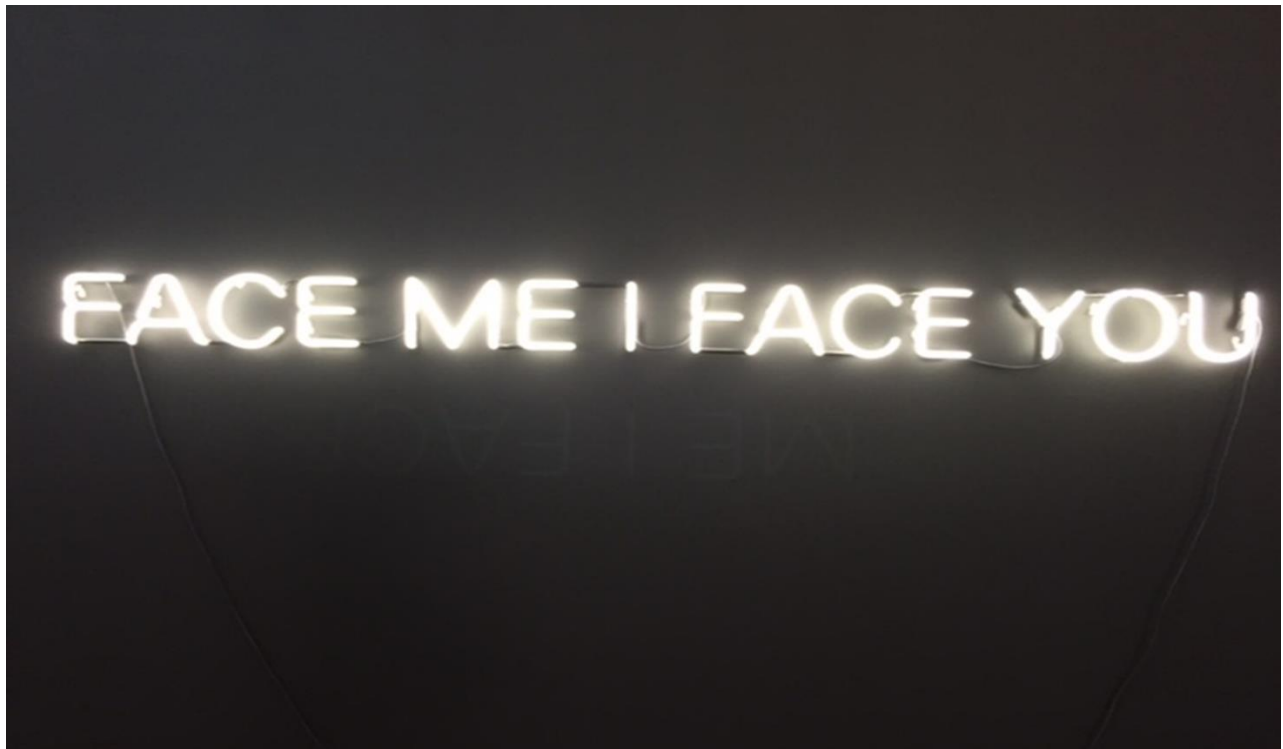Sound Encounters and Unformed Potential (of the undocumented, noise and gossip)

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Terrence: What is this for? What is it going to be used for? Is it going to be a publication?

Mirka: We are creating a sensory publication that introduces different sound encounters prompted in some ways by undocumented students' experiences. Undocumented students' experiences are not represented in this work directly but they are multiplied, diversified, made unintelligible in order to provoke and enable series of unanticipated association in the users. We would like users to live through and experience our and their different interactions with these materials. In addition, we are curious what kind of sensory openings and series of interactive sensations can be created when individuals and scholars interact again, and again, and again with seemingly same yet different sound and visual materials.

Enrique: Yeah, maybe. Leaping somewhere else… What's going on?

Justin: Yes, leaping somewhere else. Exactly. Move from an image to a sound and back. From them, to us, to you and back!

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This iterative and a-signifying sound experimentation project started from simple wonderings that emerged from undocumented college students' interview data. As the researchers began to reflect on the data provided by these students, conversations around noise and gossip began to emerge. Over time, the conversations about noise and gossip transmogrified into various soundscapes and audio recordings that extended also beyond noise and gossip. "Let's work more with the sound and try to extend effects and create affects. Maybe produce another extension of that video in such a way that we would still be working with the thing, whatever the thing was" stated Mirka and Justin. Justin would go on to say, "It's less and less representational and signifying. Our sound encounters produce something different than what we originally intended them to be. Or they work, or function as whatever."

The potential absence of representation caused a tension and worry that our work might no longer function as a form of advocacy and it might not change the circumstances for undocumented students. This concern resulted in questions about representation itself which are addressed in our encounters and within different video examples. For instance, whether or not social justice research is concerned with accurate representation and consequently if representation then becomes a territory of power and micro-fascisms that once again coerce representations in predetermined ways. Indeed, while social justice research focuses on nuanced and critical representations it also maintains the criteria for those labels. Thus representation is controlled by a given discourse and territory and as such "social justice" accepts or rejects research based on whether or not it fits thereby selecting its representations. In doing so, the subjects of the research are being produced within the representations accepted by this research territory. This is not to say that representations are entirely problematic, but representations are always embedded within systems of power. Thus, our attempt was to resist representation by allowing for maximum heterogeneity and a production of multiplying and diversifying representations.

Therefore, the purpose of this creation is to put forward some provocations, free associations, create spaces for unformed potential to emerge and to allow users to create their own experiences sounds, images, thoughts, and politics. Within our video we offer some problematizing questions, data middles, or emergent becoming's of data noise and educational gossip that are visibly absent but at the same time 'always already' here. Following Derrida and Deleuze the binary between absence and presence no longer holds but absence can be thought as a form of presence and presence a form of absence. For example, the absence of students' interview data in our soundscapes still refers and traces back to students' and our experiences yet many of these events are past events and as such no longer exist. Created soundscapes also carry within them traces of non-undocumented students, non-experiences,

contradictions, and the other; the other half that is 'not there, and not that'. In other words, traces of something else and beyond a particular category or subjectivity are always found. In that way, our sound experiments serve as infinite substitutions. Similarly, there are multiple potential substitutions, entry and exist ways to immigration and the geopolitical of the undocumented. Rather than presenting something for you (the user) to passively consume, we invite you to explore with us and see what can be created and produced through the emerging encounters.

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It is our hope that the videos and the differing order in which they can be viewed generates a possibility for something else to occur and emerge in users. Like Enrique who used existing sound and interviews to create his own experiences of gossip and noise as a part of this project, we encourage users to create their own experiences allowing something else, something different and emerging to become. This type of free-associating also serves as one type of resistance to normative scholarly practices and linear textual representation of research. It also promotes methodologies without methodologies (see e.g., Koro-Ljungberg, 2016) and scholarly work after or against the method (Law, 2004, 2006; Manning, 2016). These experiences could become a type of research-creations bringing together scholarship and artistic forms of inquiry. For Manning (2016) research-creations "open the field of experience to the more-than of objects and subjects preformed" (p. 12). Research-creations are pragmatically speculative practices and immanent activities always producing an immanent critique bringing thinking to making and making to thinking. Research-creations study the world and us within it in ways, which does not focus on the form or outcome but processes (see also Whitehead et al. (1978) and process philosophy). Furthermore, "the differential, the active hyphen that brings making to thinking and thinking to making, ensures that research-creation remain an ecology of practices" (Manning, 2016, p.13). Research-creations are concerned with artful and artistic practices. Manning (2016) asks: "Is it possible to create an account of immanent movement and autistic perception that convinces us that there are other ways to be free?" (p.120). Some things, doings, processes, encounters, and interactions are left unspoken and un-expressible.

From our perspective video is a relatively untapped and often quite narrowly used medium in qualitative research. The typical pattern is to keep film and video focused on representations of the world (i.e., videos of students in the classroom, photographs of bodies or spaces) (see Marion & Crowder, 2013). However, video is also capable of untold and non-describable things. This project experimented with what video might do in conjunction with sound (Gershon, 2013). In this project video/image and sound worked like two disconnected planes. Some videos played off the sounds in the places that images cut out and in or changed in color or effect. However, some videos were created independently of the sounds and the sounds were layered over the video. The images were created to be a-signifying in that they are formed representations, but not created to signify anything in particular (Guattari, 1996 p. 150). In this way the video creates a kind of vertigo, which can be difficult to manage at first, but works at creating a medium in which the sounds might find spaces for connection. In some places the video may also actively work against the sound. We do not find this problematic considering the way it engages with concepts of noise and gossip. In this way, the project creates relationships with art-based modes of research that work through affect rather than thought or experience.

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User Options

There are several ways that a user can engage and interact with the online video materials (i.e. through auto play, outline, and random play). The auto play option allows the user to experience the material in more linear fashion. The displayed structure embedded in the auto play follows traditional research presentation formats (e.g., introduction, literature, methods, results, conclusion, references, and appendix). Recognizing that users may prefer to interact with the sound experimentation project differently, we have also provided two additional options. In the outline version, users have the ability to skip around the various sections in any order they wish. The last option, random play, starts the user at a random point in the sound experimentation project. This option comes with the most uncertainty, messiness, and disorganization as the user navigates the videos through the various links that pop-up during the experience or simply allows the videos to randomly auto play.

To access the video article, click the link with the associated option of your choice.

1) **Auto Play:** The user experiences the video presentation in linear fashion. To engage, click this link below:
   https://youtu.be/T2kGdS-fWbA?list=PLoZ1K7VTPvrAGsURqNYKTNxLBjRPsO3LG
2) **Outline:** The user has the option to skip sections and forgo the auto play option. To engage, click this link below:
   https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoZ1K7VTPvrAGsURqNYKTNxLBjRPsO3LG
3) **Random Play:** The user begins at a random point within the videos. This option comes with the most uncertainty, messiness, and disorganization. To engage, click this link below:
   https://youtu.be/jD8cjvQRIlQ?list=PLoZ1K7VTPvrAGsURqNYKTNxLBjRPsO3LG

The videos are meant to produce something in conjunction with the user, not represent a state of affairs, but to make a new state of affairs possible. Thus, we invite users to comment and like videos through the YouTube interface. Users may comment on several videos or they may find a space in all of the mess that they find enjoyable and comment there. For example, users could create, reply, duplicate, and/or combine comments. What does the experience create? What does it make you think about data, research, and undocumented students? What and how does it produce in you, in your environment, and in others?

Now join the experience and become a part of this ongoing and interactive experiment!

References

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Appendix

Immigration Web Links

1. https://www.afsc.org/imm-rights?gclid=CLyJuZzQitACFQ5Efgod30ECgA
2. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/04/leave-die-choice-facing-immigrants-south-africa-150420103040830.html
3. http://archive.azcentral.com/news/articles/global-immigration-main.html
4. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24521614
5. http://borderzine.com/2014/06/illegal-immigration-a-global-problem/
6. https://www.catholiccharitiesaz.org/all-locations/refugee-resettlement
7. http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-Issues/2010/1009/Global-doors-slam-shut-on-immigrants
8. http://forms.nomoredeaths.org/en/
9. http://iomiraq.net/
10. http://www.migrationpolicy.org/
11. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/23/world/americas/haiti-migrants-earthquake.html?_r=0
12. http://theadac.org/
13. http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/04/australia-immigration/480189/
14. http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749d2e21.html
15. https://www.rescue.org/
16. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/empirical2/migrationflows.shtml
17. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/refugees/419976/
18. http://www.unrwa.org/syria-crisis
19. http://www.unhcr.org/en-us
20. http://unitedwedream.org/
21. http://www.bakermckenzie.com/en/expertise/areasofpractice/global-immigration--mobility/