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CART 360 ETUDE

Bus stop drummer

I doubt I will be the only one mentioning a bus stop. It's also a place where people put headphones on and leave it to Boredom to greet you with a great big hug. The bus stop nearest to my apartment on Hoshelaga street is a stern combination of concrete, metal sheets and glass. It has light embedded in the roof and wooden bench supported by thick metal poles. The sensory experience of being inside is governed by the heat trapped inside, the smell of old cigarette butts, and the grey light shining from the dirty window. A dreadful place. No colors to brighten the dead materials other than a bit of red and blue on the stop's sign post. In such a linear environment, man acts accordingly: like nothing matters around him other than the potential of a bus arriving. I am no different, usually when sitting at a bus stop, I dive out of the world through my headphones and reappear when the bus arrives. Are things really that dull? Perhaps not: at the stop I share both location and short term goals with strangers for a brief moment. We are here for a calculated period of time and share a common expectation of the experience. We will probably also react the same way when something out of the ordinary happens: "that bus is late" or "wow that guy is out of it". It's a temporary common ground where the complexities of the day lose their meaning, outplayed by this forced pause during which one can only wait. It's a crossroads between countless paths, where one waits instead of going. You could say that is what the bus stop affords me, an ephemeral common ground or closeness with the world that lives around.

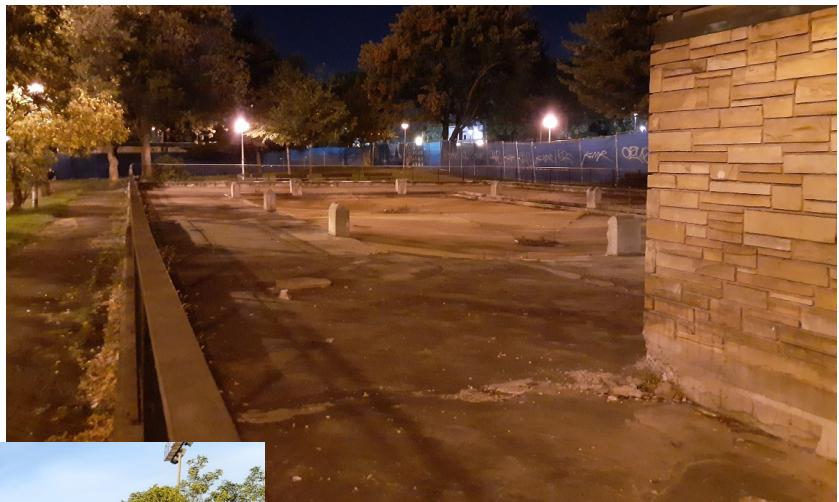
Alone or with others, a pause at a bus stop is the perfect place for something unexpected to happen – the observer is only there temporarily and will soon move on to more important things. His position vis à vis the world around him is contemplative and uninvolved. He will seek out and focus on any distractions available: storefronts, cars, trees, graffiti. It's a perfect place for art.

What if an interactive piece was housed inside the shelter, that would activate when someone walked inside. One of my first instincts in face of boredom is to tap out or imagine a rhythm. How could one create a mechanized hammer that taps out rhythm on a surface of the stop? Could there be many surfaces used? Could the hammer react to some kind of stimulus from the observer (making him a user)?



Pataugeoire

Near my house there is Prefontaine parc, and inside Prefontaine parc there is a kid's pool (pataugeoire). It is a fairly large space, consisting of a large slab of concrete with a foot-deep pool, with concrete blocks along the sides that house the jets. It is surrounded by a low metal fence painted black. In the summer it is active, and passer-byes witness the contagious energy of water splashing on the concrete and kids channeling their crazy. Parents watch with wonder and anxiety, revisiting memories from their past. I am always tempted by the idea of dipping into the water when I pass a fountain or a public jet – there is a feeling of well being to be found in the touch of water. When the fall comes, the kid's pool becomes a dead space - a symmetrical slab of concrete with protruding blocs. Dead leaves and the stern black fence are the only elements that punctuate the solid grey sight. This place, which to my eyes symbolizes a simple feeling of joy and excitement, will be in ruin until next summer. Concrete doesn't look or feel good on its own - it needs to harbour life and activity to take on meaning.



The space at the center of the pool, as well as the space between the blocs that house the jets, stands out greatly when the water and people are gone. The layout of the pool is designed for a specific purpose: to create space through which kids can run freely and safely amid a criss-cross of water jets. I remembered noticing that dead space before, and that was what brought me back to look for inspiration in Prefontaine parc. It would be interesting to use the layout of the blocs to create a piece that asks the user to move around the space, between blocs or from one to another. Switches could be placed on the

blocs that trigger an action, perhaps a combination of switches would have to be activate in a specific order for something to happen. Perhaps something could be fitted on top of the blocs that senses someone's presence by other means. Since there are blocs on every side of this concrete rectangle, could mics be placed to hear someone moving across the space? Could this be a stage for something or a play area? Building on the idea proposed above of creating a tapping mechanism, maybe the fence around the pool could be used to create spatialized noises, or something musical even. Different blocs could trigger short musical sequences, so that they could be used orchestrally by a group of people, or very few people running around.

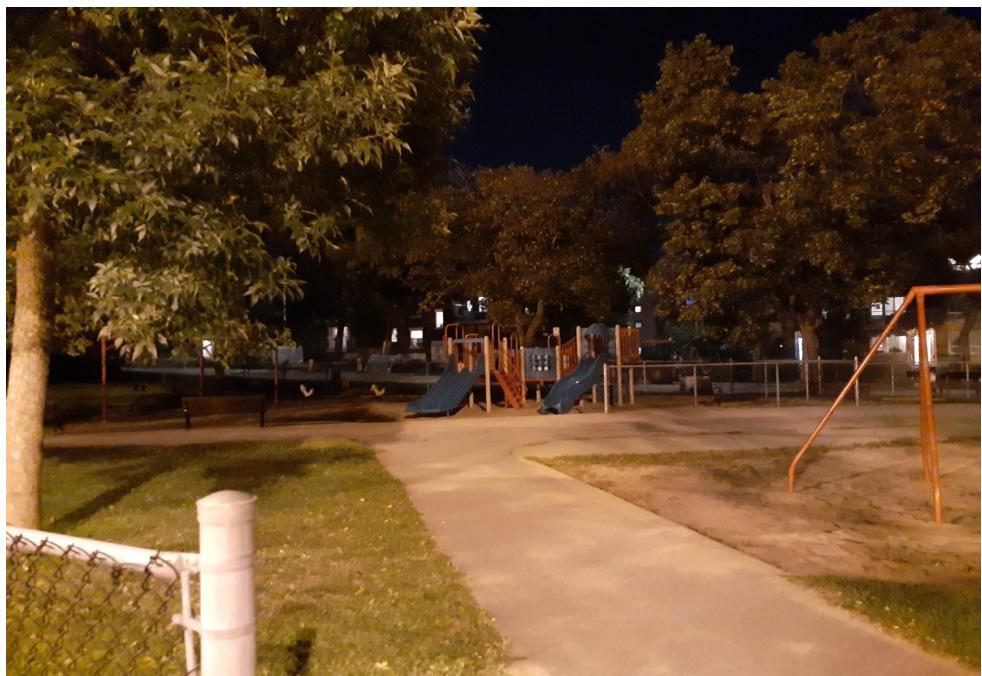
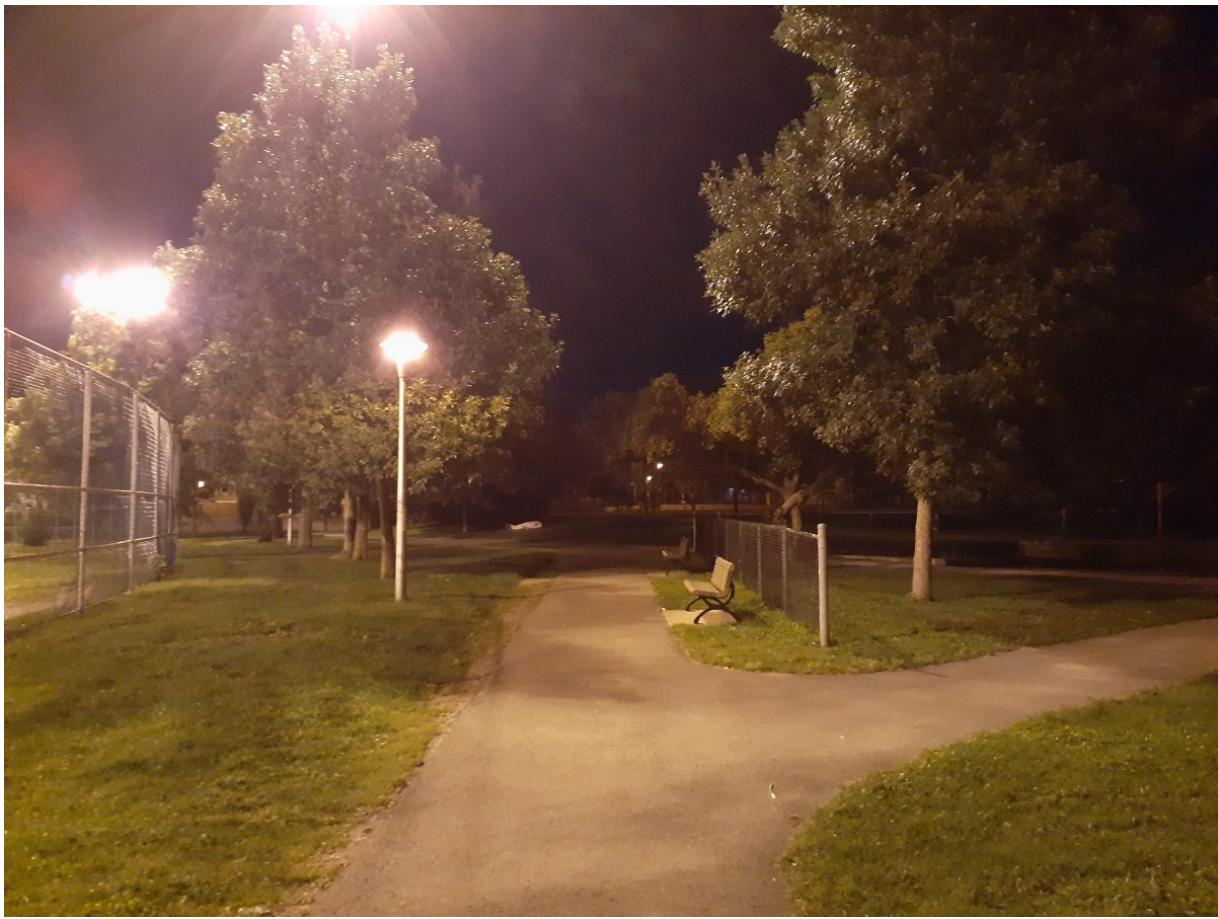


Crannies

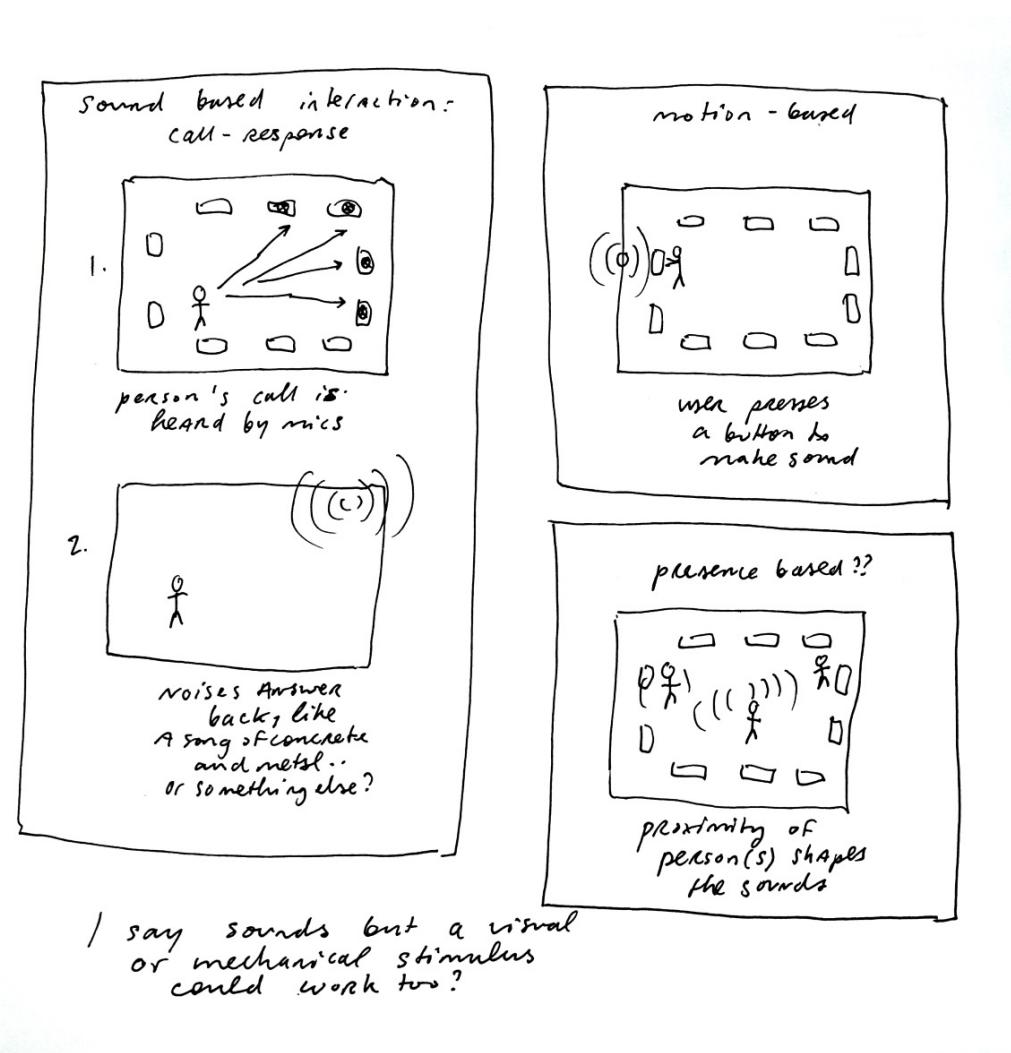
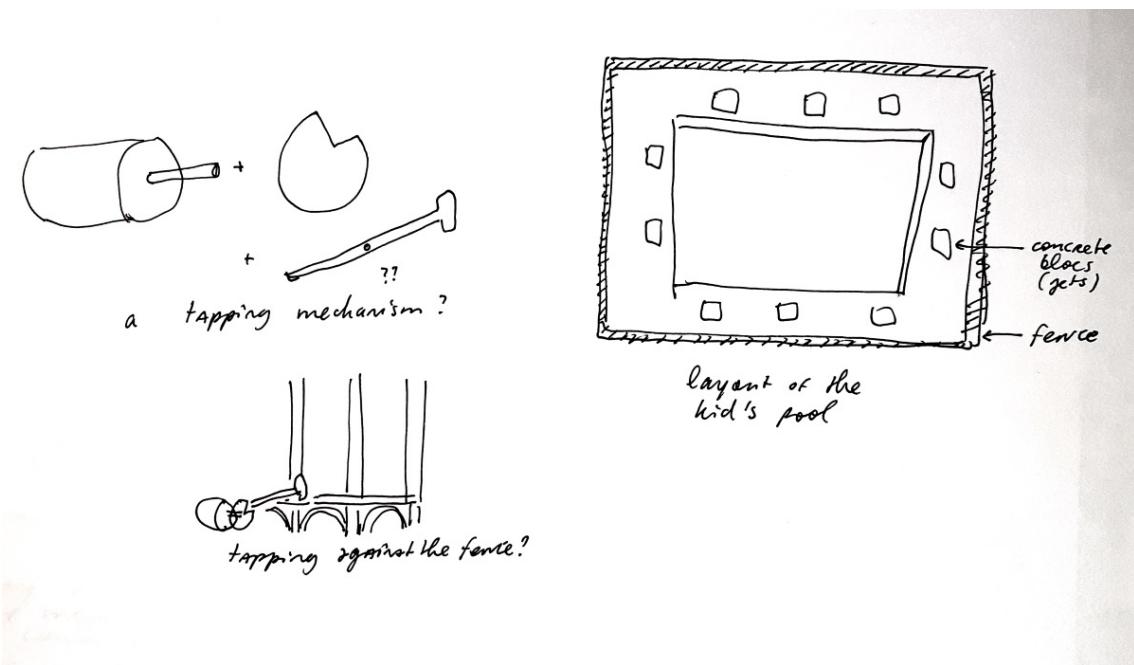
It is a little over 9 PM in Prefontaine parc and the September sun is long gone at this point. I sit down on the empty stands of the baseball field. The flood lights that surround it create a kind of bright bubble in the dark park that surrounds it. And the parc itself is of an abyssal darkness in contrast with the lit up streets of the neighborhood. People's silhouettes disappear from the street, into the shadows, only to reappear at the next street light or beside the baseball field. A parc at night is a "thing" in itself, for the feelings of mysterious pleasure that the environment induces. It is a man-made arrangement of trees, bushes, grass, paths, benches and tables. During the day, all kinds of people come to hang out, enjoy their freedom and the passage of time. Some stick around late and witness the transformation of the bustling public space into something calm, mysterious, dark, oneiric, romantic, sensual and potentially dangerous. As I start to walk back home, I notice groups of youngsters in the shadows, chatting and drinking their way through the evening. I am reminded of countless evenings spent with friends and loves, finding and occupying our own spot in a parc, and remaining there until the sun is down and the environment has taken a new shape entirely. Walking through the path, every turn seems to hide a new mystery. Tiny sounds becomes easy to hear with the filtering of the trees that cuts the hum of the city, which tones down at this hour. I am reminded of nightly walks on Mont Royal mountain, where there are belvederes to reach and places to explore. Delights for young hearts to uncover on their adventures.

I think of a piece which could be set in a parc, and intended to be experienced at night only. There could be a light sensor that prevents it from turning on during the day. I could see dim lights moving in a tree, or something that plays sounds very quietly and requires the calm of night to appreciate fully. What about lights in the trees that "follow" a person walking through the parc? This kind of piece would be a sort of dreamy encounter in an unexpected place.

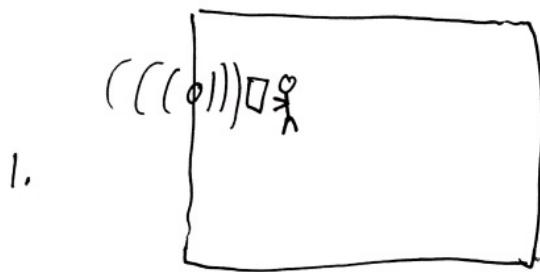




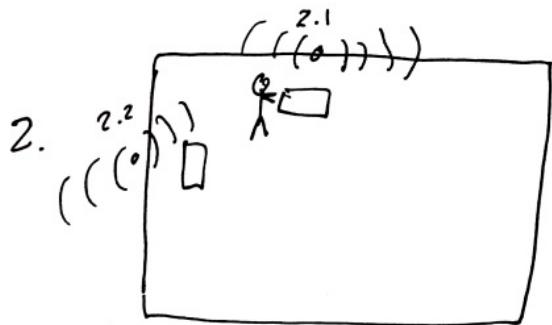
Sketches for Pataugeoire



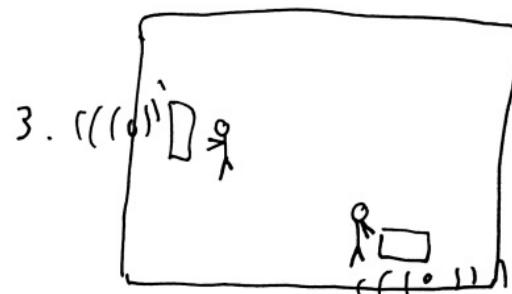
how a motion based piece would/could work,



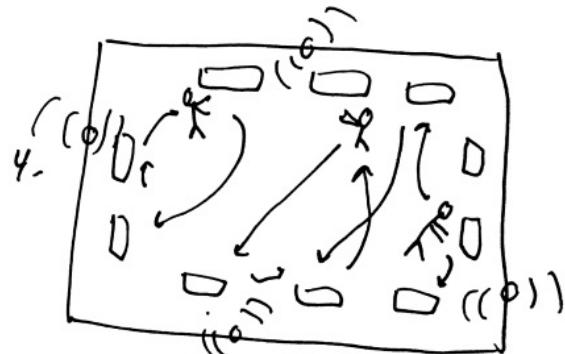
1.
User pushes a button to trigger sound



2.
However The trigger won't work twice - He has to move to another block to trigger a different sound (2.1), then maybe the first gets called back (2.2)



3. ((1))
others can join in
on the jam
And work out a
creative flow



4.
And coordinate
a musical game
or exchange of
some kind