

I'm writing from Boise Idaho, arcing my thoughts back through the dust and smoke of a burning Western Summer, and returning to June of this year when I was visiting Connecticut for an immersive residency with the University of Hartford's Nomad MFA program. For a class, Art and Ecology, my cohort and I along with our professors Christy Gast and Camila Marambio, and bryologist Dr Bernard Goffinet of the University of Connecticut visited the Crystal Peat Conservation Area in Tolland CT. This visit introduced us to the dynamics of a peat bog ecosystem, and called into question what kind of ecosystem we were currently standing on. We found ourselves looking around with some uncertainty, as the professional Bryologist, Dr Goffinet, assured us that what we were looking at was in fact **not** a bog.

A peat bog is a type of wetland ecosystem characterized by the presence of mosses, most usually sphagnum moss, which colonizes the wetland, and changes the soil and water to prevent other species from surviving there. Peat bogs are present all over the world and store large amounts of carbon. Although they cover less than three per cent of global land surface, estimates suggest that peatlands contain twice as much as in the world's forests. On the wooded, verdant path that descended into the watery lowlands of the Crystal Peat Conservation Area, I was struck by the sounds of the space. The large birches and heavy vegetation, the birds calling back and forth, the carpets of moss, and pools of still water felt room-like.

I'd come there with the idea of recording the "voice of the bog" - to come to know Crystal Peat through recording its various sounds. I also wanted to use the opportunity of being at Crystal Peat to attempt a new version of Alvin Lucier's 1969 sound art piece "i am sitting in a room".

"The piece features Lucier recording himself narrating a text, and then playing the [tape recording](#) back into the room, re-recording it. The new recording is then played back and re-recorded, and this process is repeated. Since all rooms have characteristic [resonance](#) or [formant](#) frequencies the effect is that certain [frequencies](#) are emphasized as they resonate in the room, until eventually the words become unintelligible, replaced by the pure resonant harmonies and tones of the room itself." - (Wikipedia)

I wanted to hear myself disappear into the "bog" - and re-wrote Lucier's text, replacing the word "room" with "bog." At Crystal Peat, I recorded myself reading that text among the hummucks of Sphagnum Moss.

Now I'm in a bathroom on Jefferson Street in Boise Idaho, about to play my bog recording into it, through a speaker placed in the clawfoot bathtub. It is early September and the air outside the window is hazy with smoke blowing over from fires around the northwest. I am on the second floor of the house and at eye level with the silver maple tree's canopy. I think that the maple branches covered along their lengths with pointed regular leaves looks similar to an individual piece of sphagnum moss. I am placing myself in the headspace of a "bog," I am seeing bog everywhere. My project, to re-create Lucier's experiment using

my “bog” recording requires me to find my closest bog. This bathroom, dedicated to the flow of water will be my “bog.”

To accurately reproduce Lucier’s project I would have had to do the process of recording and playing back that I am currently performing in a bathroom, in the “bog” itself.

Maybe you’ve noticed the word “bog” occasionally appears in this introduction framed by quotes. This is because when we visited Crystal Peat, we found that it had been altered by the process of peat harvesting decades before. What we encountered there was a not/bog- or a bog in transition- or what might be considered the ruin of a bog. This not/bog inspired the recording that you will now hear, which is in its way, another not/bog. By not recording this piece at the original bogsite, but instead recording in a bathroom in ID, I am replacing the resonant frequencies generated in the bog with the sounds of ceramic tile, wood, metal, and glass as they reflect and reverberate the sounds being played. Throughout this process I have been hearing my voice, my “bog voice,” removed further and further under the frequencies of the room as they take over. This self erasure is an annihilation and transformation. Hearing myself replaced, I feel connected to Crystal Peat; the ruin, the transformed. With reverence and sincere regard I dedicate this recording experiment to Crystal Peat.