

Artists:
Bécharud Hudon

Curator:
Marie-Hélène Leblanc

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forest monologue

Bécharud Hudon are an artist duo who listen, watch, and pay attention.

Over the past few years, Bécharud Hudon have analyzed and studied acoustic and visual phenomena in city centres, suburbs, and the human interventions found therein, in infrastructure such as bridges, tunnels, and highway interchanges. More recently, their research has focused on natural ecosystems and the more-than-human world. Consequently, their fieldwork has shifted to new areas of exploration replete with flora and fauna (birds, rivers, marshes, icebergs, oceans). Forests, and more specifically some of the Outaouais region's old-growth forests, currently play an important role in their research, offering new territories to explore, observe, and extol.

Bécharud Hudon are particularly interested in the notion of habitat and micro-habitat, and old-growth forests are teeming with living organisms that thrive in areas where very little or even no human intervention has occurred. The notion of the inhabited forest—by non-human living beings—is central to the unique perspective they share in this exhibition and in the attention they bring to what lies beyond human perception. More precisely, their new research is focused on dendro-microhabitats, which are groups of unique organic structures found in living or dead trees that provide essential habitats for flora, fauna, and fungi.

Bécharud Hudon's methodology, developed over several years, is rooted in exposing often-imperceptible visual and auditory phenomena. Using sophisticated equipment, they survey forests to help us to see and hear differently. Special sound sensors are used to record the auditory activity of the internal movement of trees and their surrounding ground, providing an intimate listening experience of the forest's temporal layers. In addition to experiencing the sound of these ecosystems, they use a full-spectrum digital camera to capture what occurs deep inside the forest, extending vision beyond the visible spectrum of the human eye and taking us into a truly surreal world. Rather than taking a direct documentary approach, Bécharud Hudon bring our attention to the complex, dynamic space from which the forests reveal themselves from different angles and in unexpected ways.

The old-growth forests that Bécharud Hudon observed, listened to, and explored over several months represent not only intricate and fragile ecosystems, but also research sites that demand humility and respect. These forests are unruly spaces where the ground is strewn with decomposing wood—shelter for countless species—and forms the crucial link that

transforms death into new life. Old-growth forests harbor many types of interspecies habitats, making them both essential and vulnerable. Béchard Hudon's unique experience of these forests demonstrates the splendor and fragility of each of these habitats. By conducting perceptual experiments that truly push the sensitive exploration of a constantly shifting world, they similarly transform our imaginations. The forest is given a voice, it reveals itself to itself and to others, it monopolizes the discourse and demands our attention. *Forest Monologue* kindles our fascination for a natural world that exists beyond our human scope by questioning and diversifying the representational codes of the forest. They even go so far as to exhibit a scientific apparatus as a kind of abstract installation that helps us grasp this ecosystem's dizzying possibilities.

While the title, *Forest Monologue*, might suggest it is the exhibition's sole interlocutor, a multitude of voices, ideas, and people were heard and consulted with over the course of its production. This forest cohabitation was made possible through a partnership with UQO'S Institute of Temperate Forest Sciences (ISFORT), and its three researchers, Sylvain Delagrangé, Frédérik Doyon, and Audrey Maheu, who agreed to share their knowledge with the artists.

Episode 1

Conversation with Frédéric Doyon
and Béchard Hudon



Episode 2

Conversation with Sylvain Delagrangé
and Béchard Hudon



Episode 3

Conversation with Audrey Maheu
and Béchard Hudon



Acknowledgements

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Biography

Catherine Béchard and Sabin Hudon have worked collaboratively for over 25 years. Their work probes the in-between spaces linked to inhabited territories, as well as the alternative or parallel temporalities of all living beings' activities. They are particularly interested in the notion of habitat and micro-habitat, by focusing on the unique characteristics and infinite configurations that are found in environments inhabited by different forms of life. They examine the sound materiality of urban, terrestrial, and aquatic ecosystems, opening intervals of attentiveness to the complexity of the world's permanent humming within the layers of reality. By thoroughly examining the space-time of places inhabited by living beings, they aim to increase our awareness of the complexity of these diverse environments and their numerous cohabitating species, to reveal a world that exists beyond what is typically audible and visible. Their creative projects take the form of installations, sculptures, sound works, videos, and photography. Their work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Canada, the United States, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Germany, Croatia, and China.