

# **Synesthesia, Phonomnesia, Memory, & Directions- Interactions and New Vocabularies of the Visual and Sonic**

Claire Paul

## Objective:

To explore the intersections of internal listening, auditory imagery and visual lexicons, to seek new forms and new vocabularies from these interactions.

A common thread in all works... *Directions  
and Time.*

Either creating directions for future moment/  
action or a result of past directions.

**Traditional mediums are home base  
for much of my work- notes, drawings,  
paintings, or object making.**



# Phonomnesia

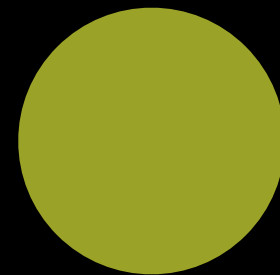
“This effect refers to a sound that is *imagined* but not actually heard...is a mental activity that involves internal listening: examples include recalling to *memory* sounds linked to a situation...(Augoyard 85)”.

Book: “Sonic Experience, A Guide to Everyday Sounds”, edited by Jean-Francois Augoyard and Henry Torgue, 2005.

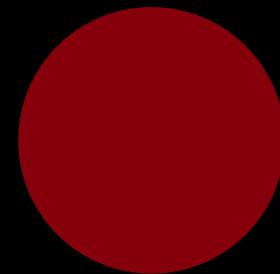
# Synesthesia

Synesthesia is a benign neurological condition in humans characterized by involuntary *cross-activation* of the senses.

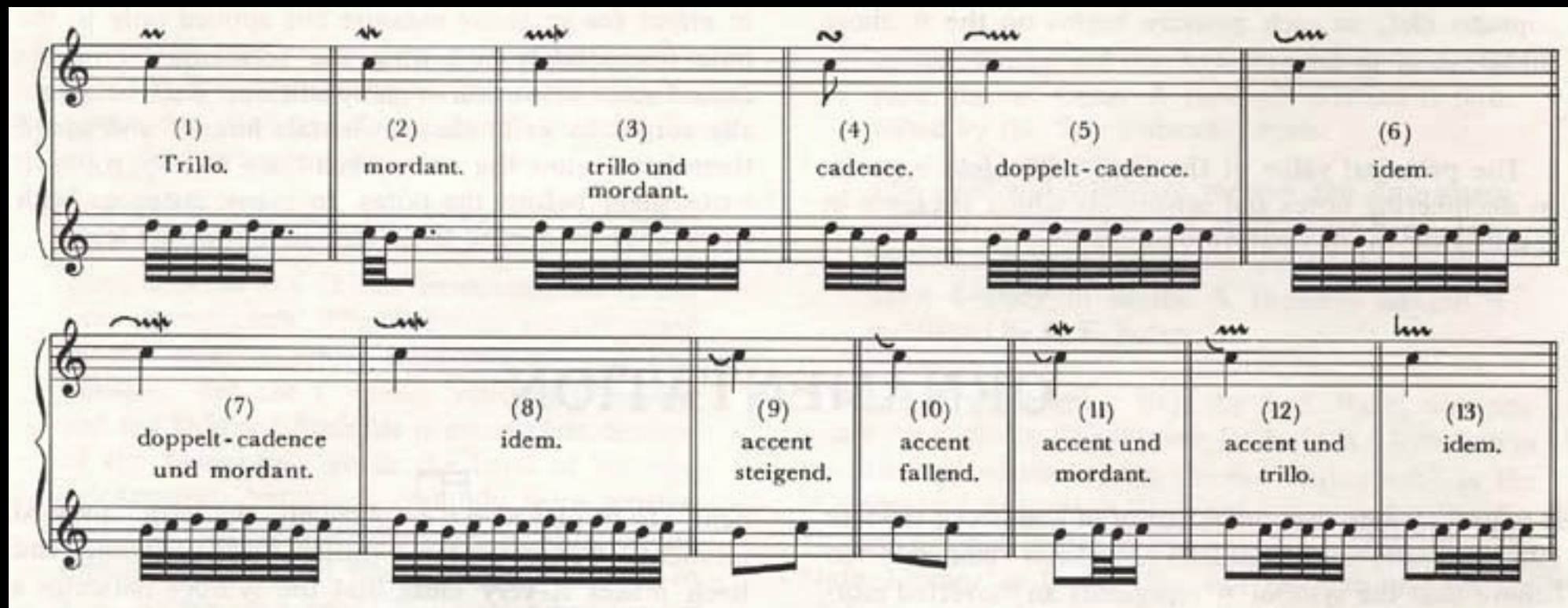
C and Eb =



D F# A triad=



- Cross-activation of the senses as I learned to read music as a child
- Even the font would influence how I internally heard/saw the music
- Baroque music in particular with trills and mordants- the visual and the sonic *merge*.



# “The sound of change: visually-induced auditory synesthesia”.

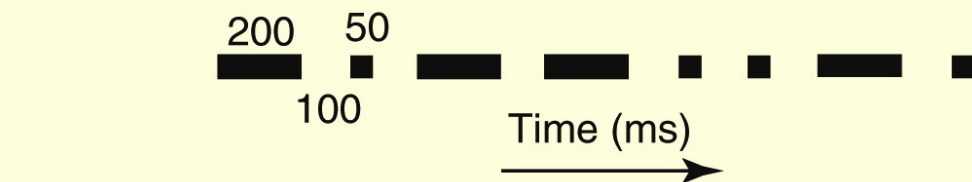
Melissa Saenz, Christof Koch

Current Biology Vol 18, Issue 15, 5 August 2008, Pages R650-R651

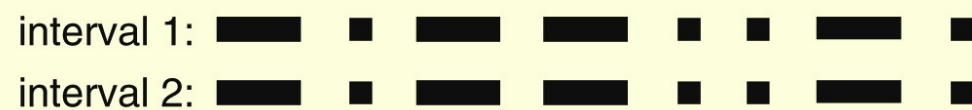
- Four synesthetes and ten age-matched control subjects were presented with rhythmic temporal sequences composed of either auditory beeps or of visual flashes (Figure 1).
- On each trial, subjects judged whether two successive sequences (either both auditory or both visual) were the ‘same’ or ‘different’ sequences.
- Sound trials both groups perform equally well, in the visual only trial...

- However, on visual trials control performance fell to near 50% chance level, while synesthetes maintained accurate performance (controls 56.3%; synesthetes 75.2%, highly significant difference between groups  $p < 0.0001$ ).

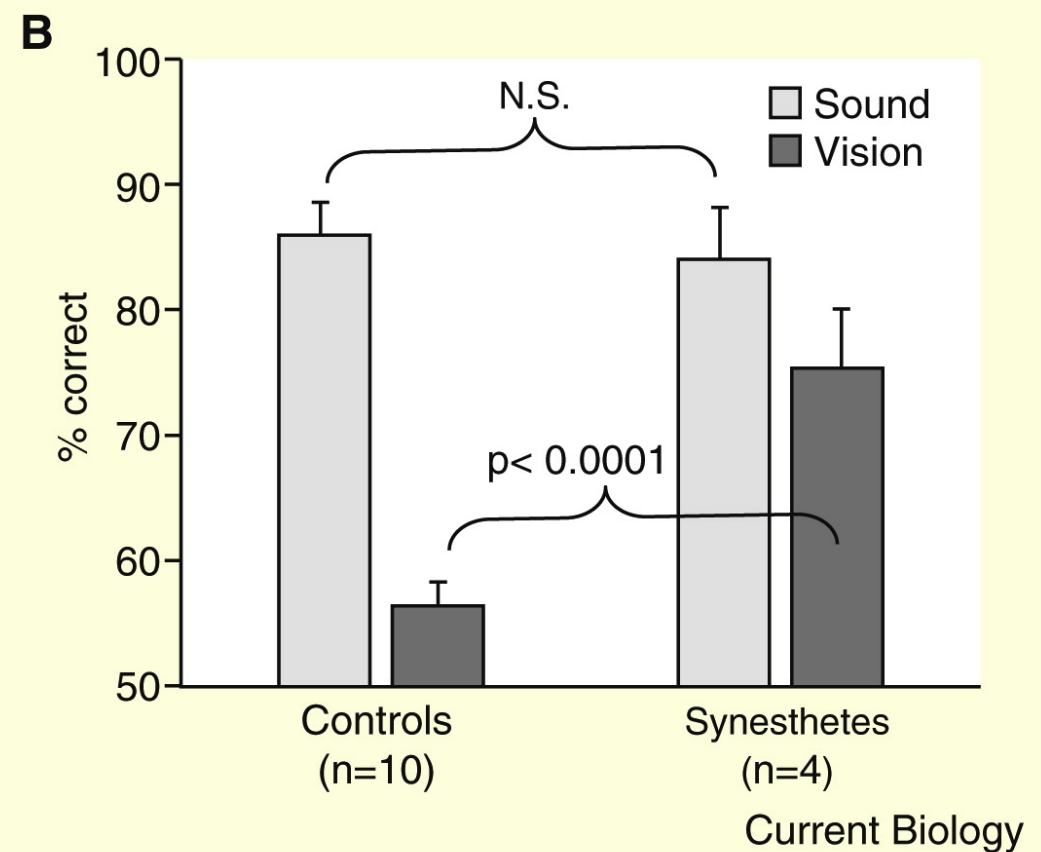
**A**  
Sample rhythmic sequence composed of flashes or beeps:



Sample 'same' trial:



Sample 'different' trial:



**What would be the output of work  
that explores this cross-activation  
of the senses?**

# The Sound Stage of the Mind: Imagined Sounds and Inner Voices

Chris Chafe



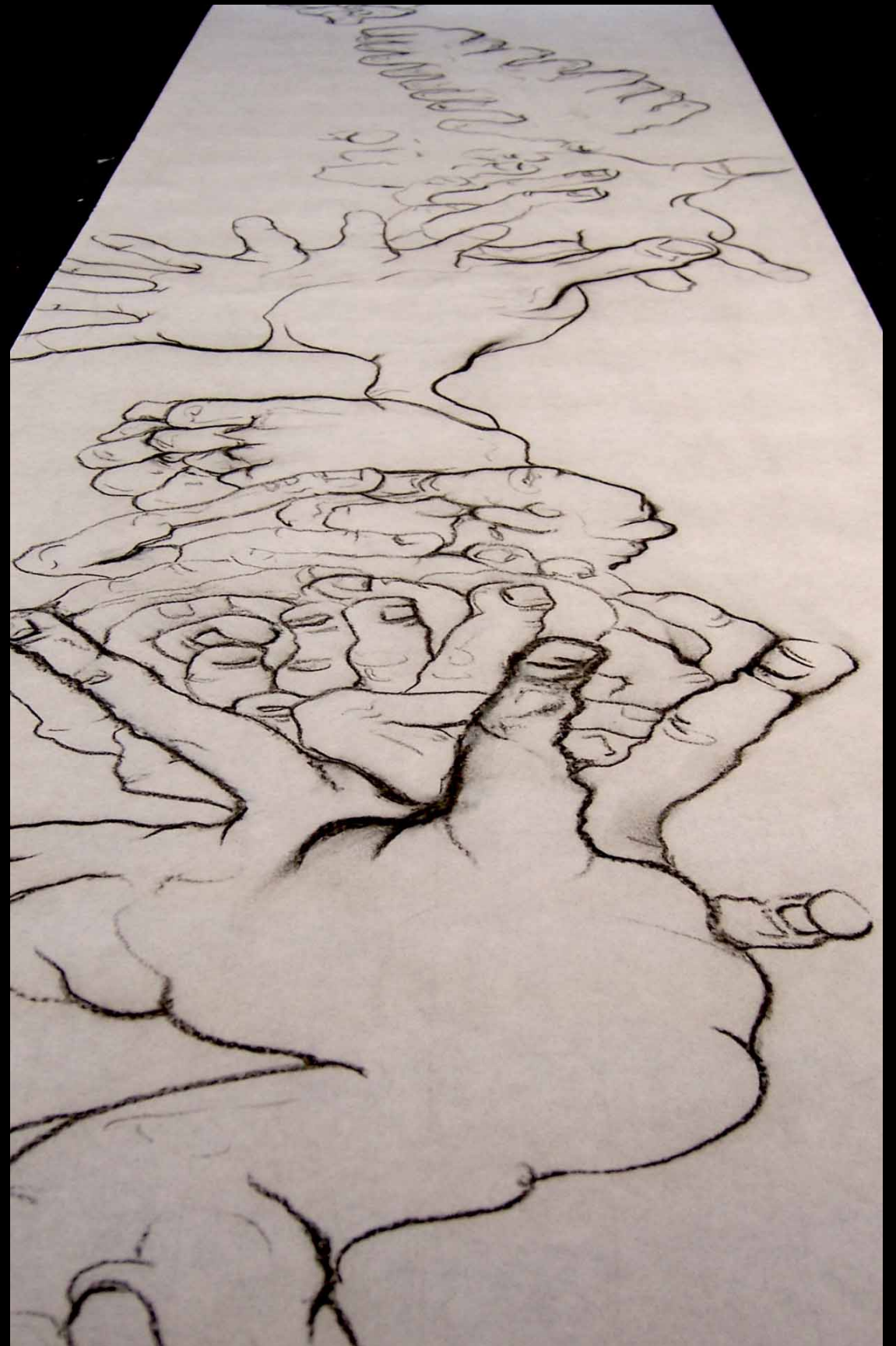
- Mentally imagining voices and sounds in the “mind’s ear” is as much a part of experience as visualizing in the “mind’s eye.”
- The vividness of sounds in the imagination varies between individuals but nearly everyone reports spontaneous sound and being able to conjure sounds intentionally. Human concepts of time.
- Spatial associations of that sound around the person
- [https://youtu.be/Sr\\_j0O2WWCs](https://youtu.be/Sr_j0O2WWCs)



# Masters Thesis

Similar to this Phonomnesis...  
the physical sensation (touch  
memory) of playing the bassoon  
and recalling sounds associated  
with that action

“Nota”, Installation, charcoal and mixed  
media on various papers, 2009, Georgia  
State University



# Scores and Performance Directions

Influenced by the potential for sound and  
performance directions in the visual and the  
cross-activation of the senses

Seeking to expand the function and language  
of the score/directions



# Sol LeWitt

## Instructions for Sol LeWitt's 1971 Wall Drawing for the School of the MFA Boston

### WALL DRAWING BOSTON MUSEUM

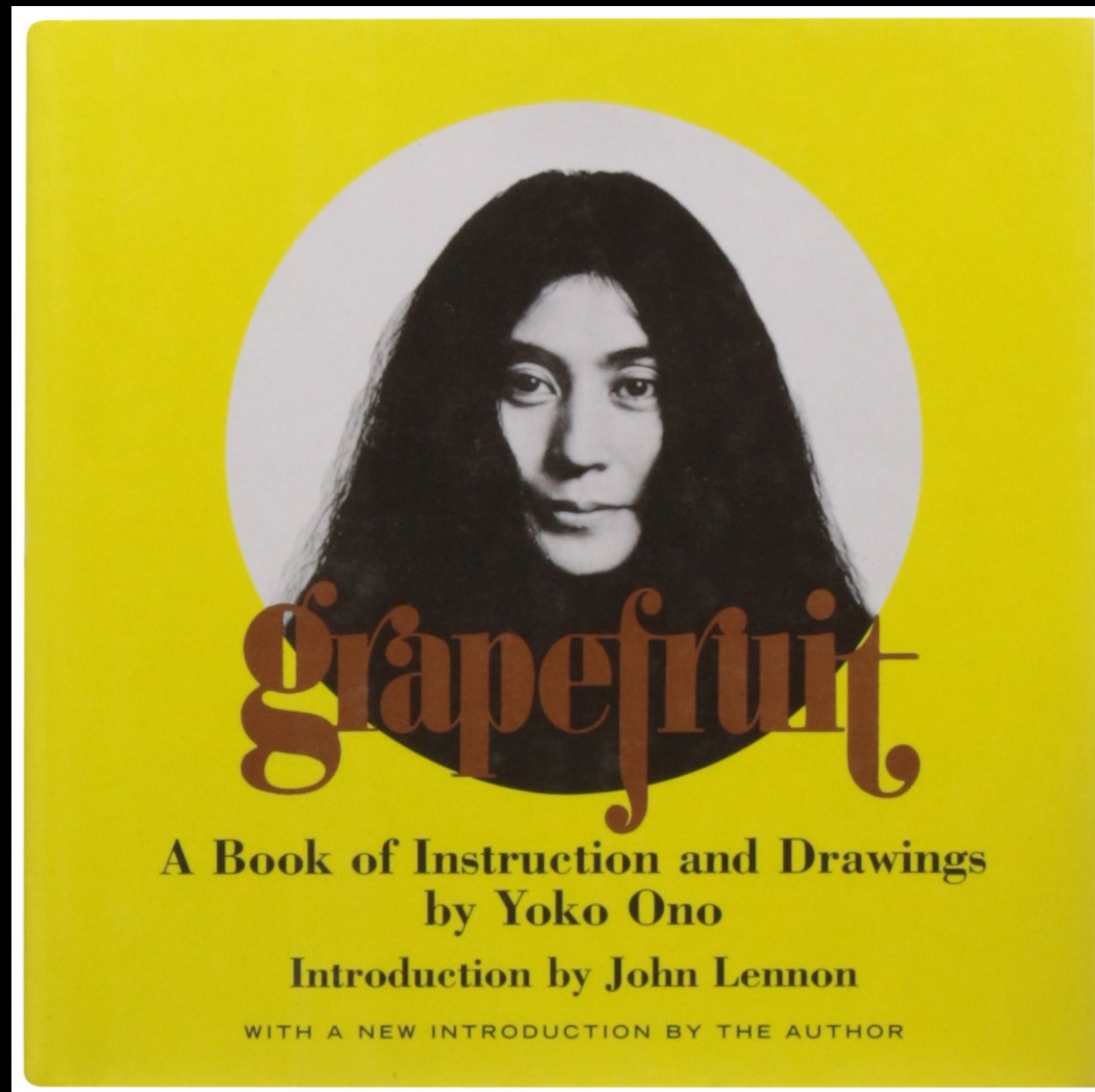
On a wall surface, any  
continuous stretch of wall,  
using a hard pencil, place  
fifty points at random.

The points should be evenly  
distributed over the area  
of the wall. All of the  
points should be connected  
by straight lines.

SOL LEWITT  
Wall drawing, Boston Museum  
Pencil

- Questions authorship and value of product- *in-potentia* for art making ( like a musical score)
- Threshold- what moments does something cross over into existence? At what moment is the work realized?





# Yoko Ono

**Performance Art Directions**  
**Shared artistic authorship and open**  
**ended possibility in process**

**Ono called her work *music of the***  
***mind***

PAINTING FOR THE WIND

Cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds  
of any kind and place the bag where  
there is wind.

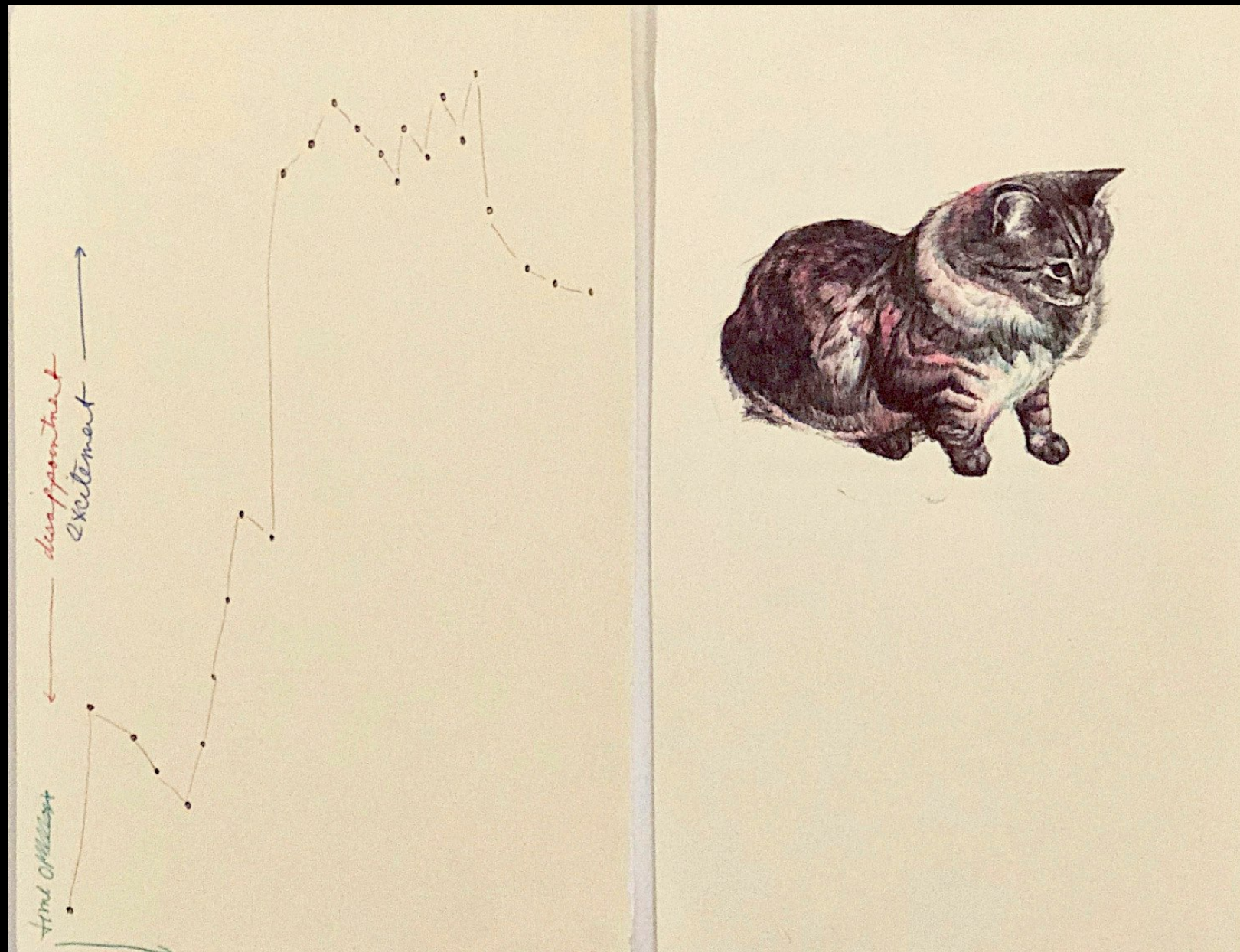
1961 summer

- LeWitt's work has a didactic precise instruction that leads to a result that has endless variations- performative
- Ono's work takes place in the imagination and authorship is again unclear- performative but also internal events.



Internal analogue data collection...excitement vs. disappointment. Record data every emotional event.





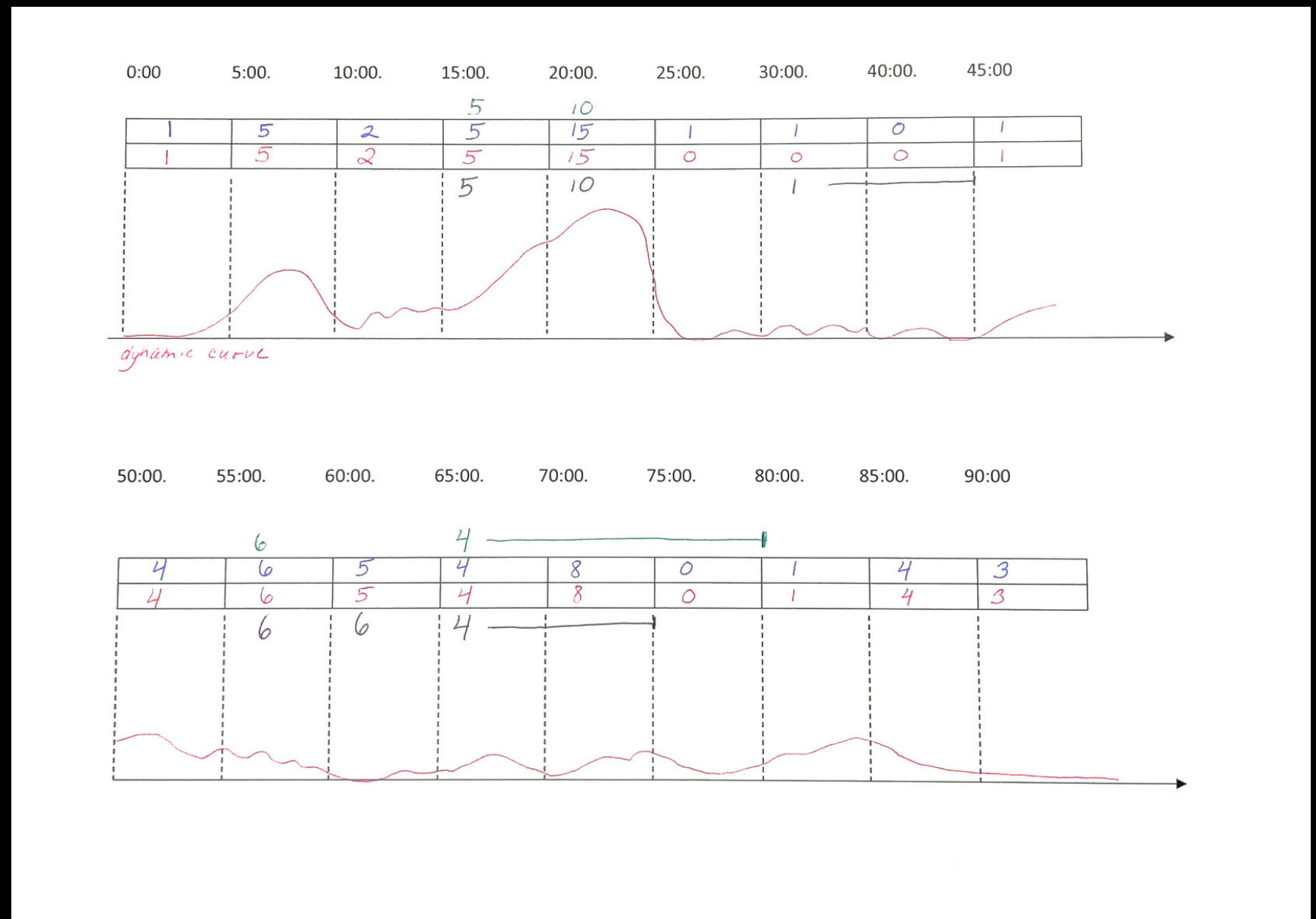
Internal analogue data collection...excitement vs. disappointment. Record data every emotional event.



# "Expectations", a score based on collected data



Electric Bassoon/Midi Effects: Claire Paul  
 Various World Percussion: Dan Bailey  
 Electric Guitar and Effects: Doug Paul  
 Manipulated Electronics and Video: Aaron Artrip





# Pauline Oliveros

**Deep Listening: A  
Composer's Sound Practice  
Cross-Sensory and venturing  
into the mystical**

# Collective Environmental Composition (1975)

*Pauline Oliveros*

• 31

## Collective Environmental Composition (1975) by Pauline Oliveros (1975/1996)

Each participant explores an environment to find a listening place with something interesting to hear and listens for a while.

Each participant invites the other participants to hear their found listening place. There may be one or more places with contrasting sounds.

Each participant finds a way to enhance, nullify or otherwise interact with the sound or sounds that the group goes to hear.

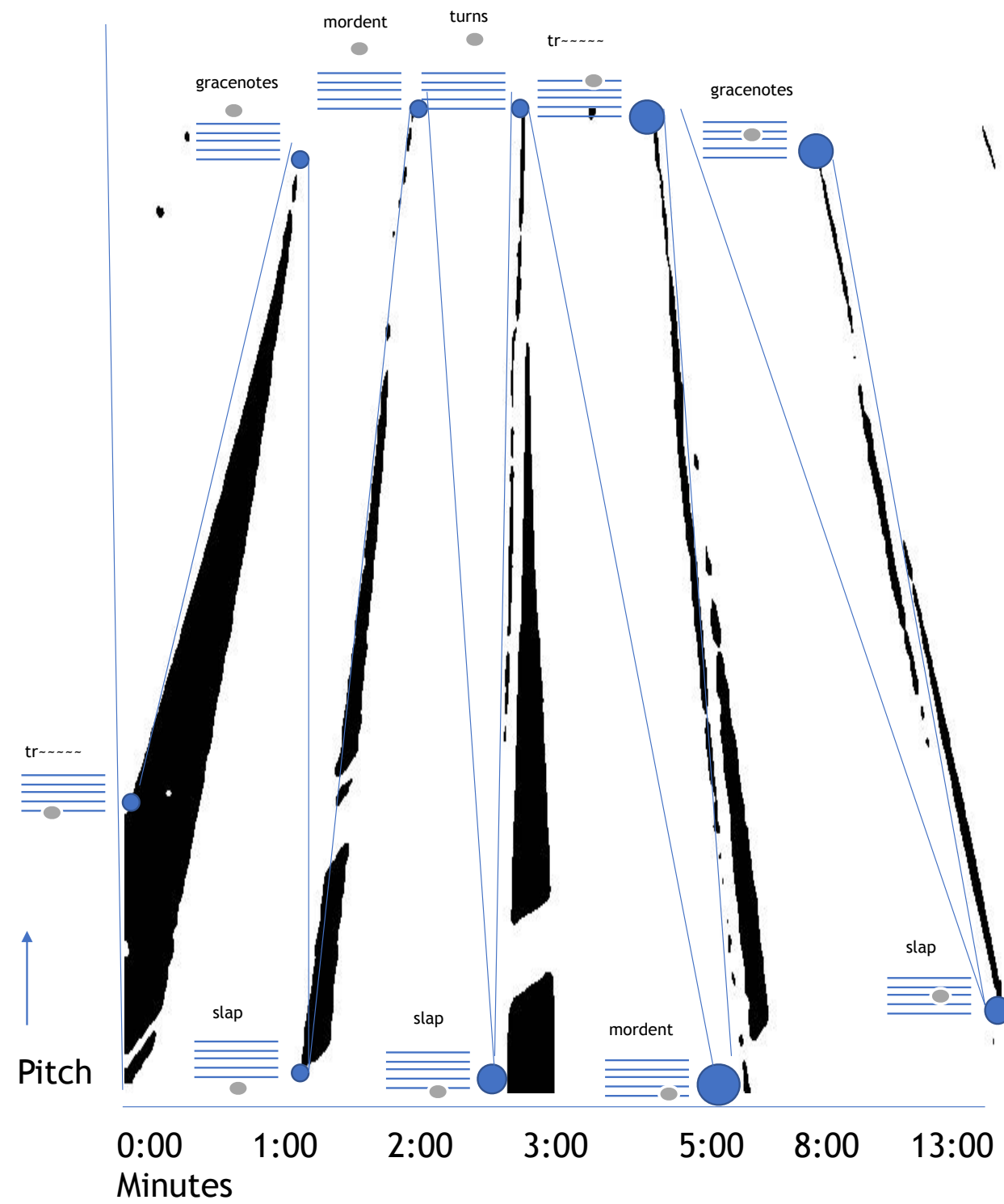
Each participant finds a way to connect all the sounds, either literally, metaphorically or graphically.

A performance agreement is negotiated.

Inspired by Pauline Oliveros to create scores/  
performance directions that sonically describe nature.

In this instance a desire to try to communicate the *visual*  
contour of a Palmetto Frond with sound performance.

# Enhance, a sound contour of a Saw Palmetto score for any peg string instrument



For each rise and fall turn peg of instrument to correspond to approx. pitch bend up or down

● = intensity



Although in its original direction, Oliveros' intended enhance to relate to sound and performance, it sparked an interest in trying to enhance place visually and on an intimate level.

These have since become a body of work that stems from a desire to designate place, to memorialize time, and enhance a personal relationship with myself and the spirit of nature through craft.

**"Embroidered Magnolia Leaves  
Response to Place- Response to  
performance direction for PLACE"  
riff on P. Oliveros "Collective  
Environmental Composition, Florida  
Magnolia Leaves, 2017**





*Acer saccharum* Maple Leaf,  
beaded maple leaf, 2017



*Quercus virginiana*, Virginia Maple  
Leaf, beaded leaf" 2018





*Coccoloba uvifera*, Sea  
Grape Leaf beaded grape  
leaf 2018



# Painting Influences Continuous Narratives & Time



Masaccio, The Tribute Money in the Brancacci Chapel c. 1424-7



# Painting Influences Impressionism & Time



Claude Monet, "Haystacks", 1890-1891

**Does the imagined sound really  
ever have to exist?**

**Could it be in the painting in stasis?**

# Eye Choreography Paintings

How we move our eyes through a painting and  
then seeking to direct that action as a  
performance...cross activates the senses with  
places and imagined sounds.





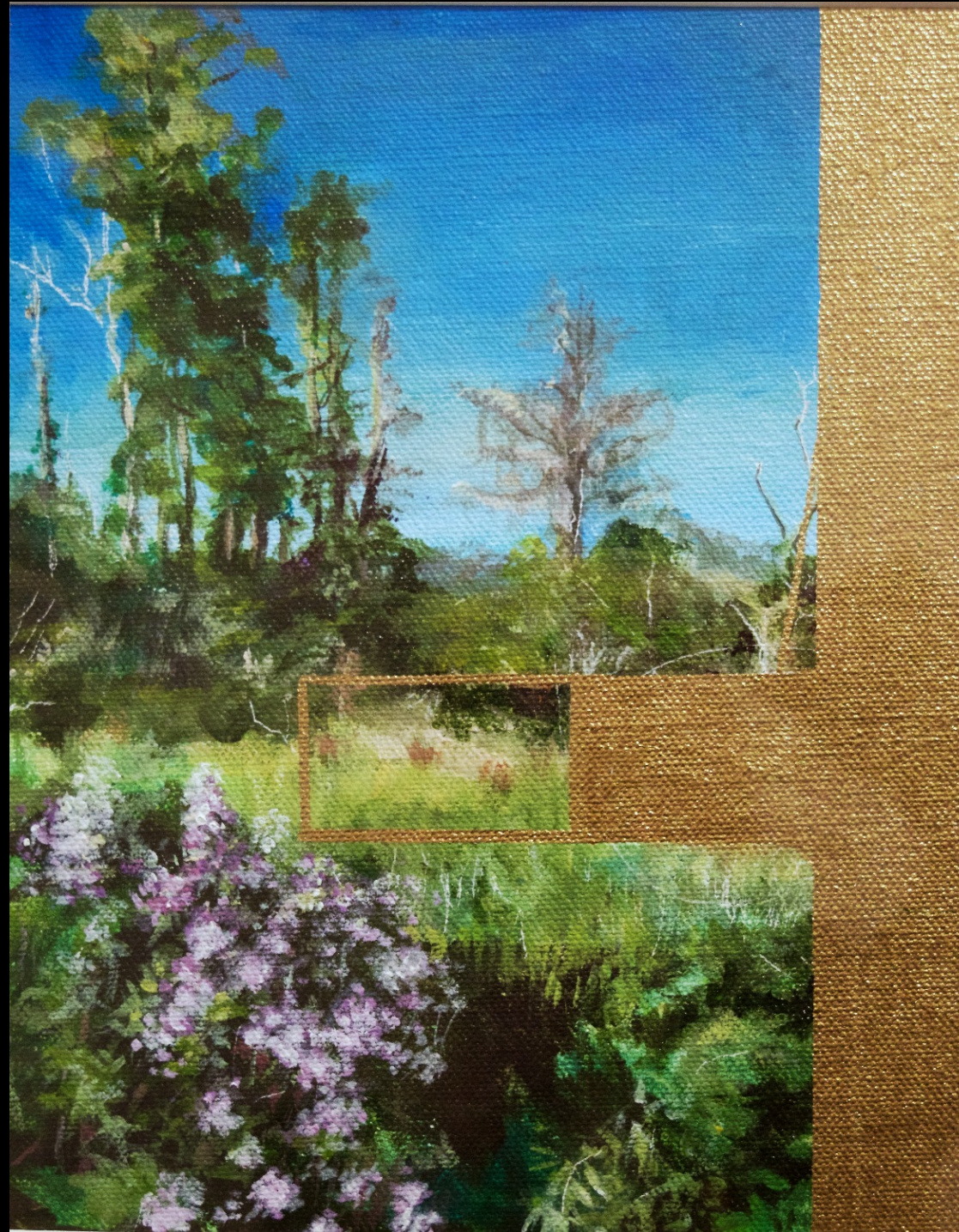
**"Suburban Nocturne- Night Sounds" Oil paint and pen on canvas, 60"x48".**





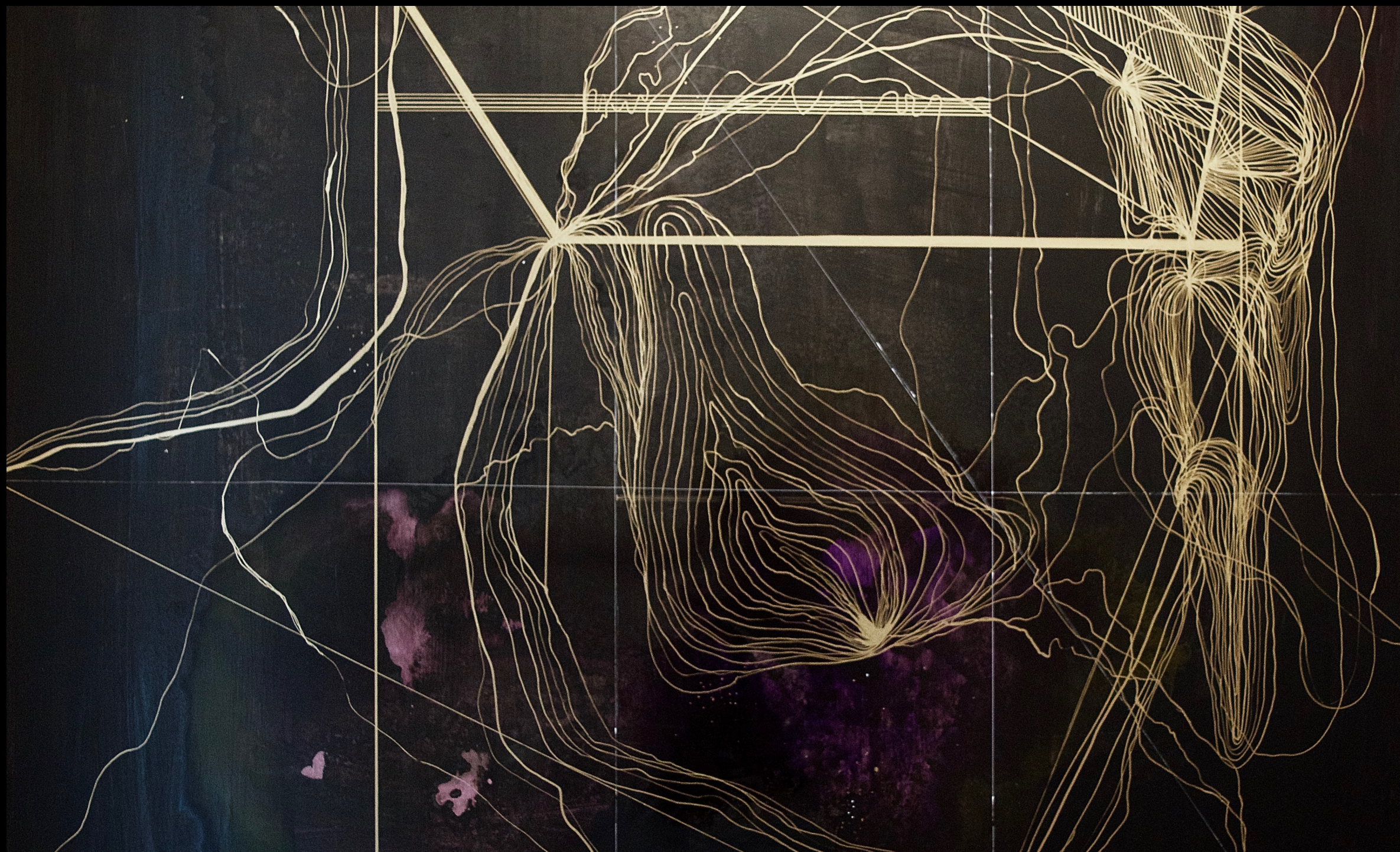
“Phonomnesis of Costal Waves and Environment”, acrylic and ink on canvas on board, 12”x16”.





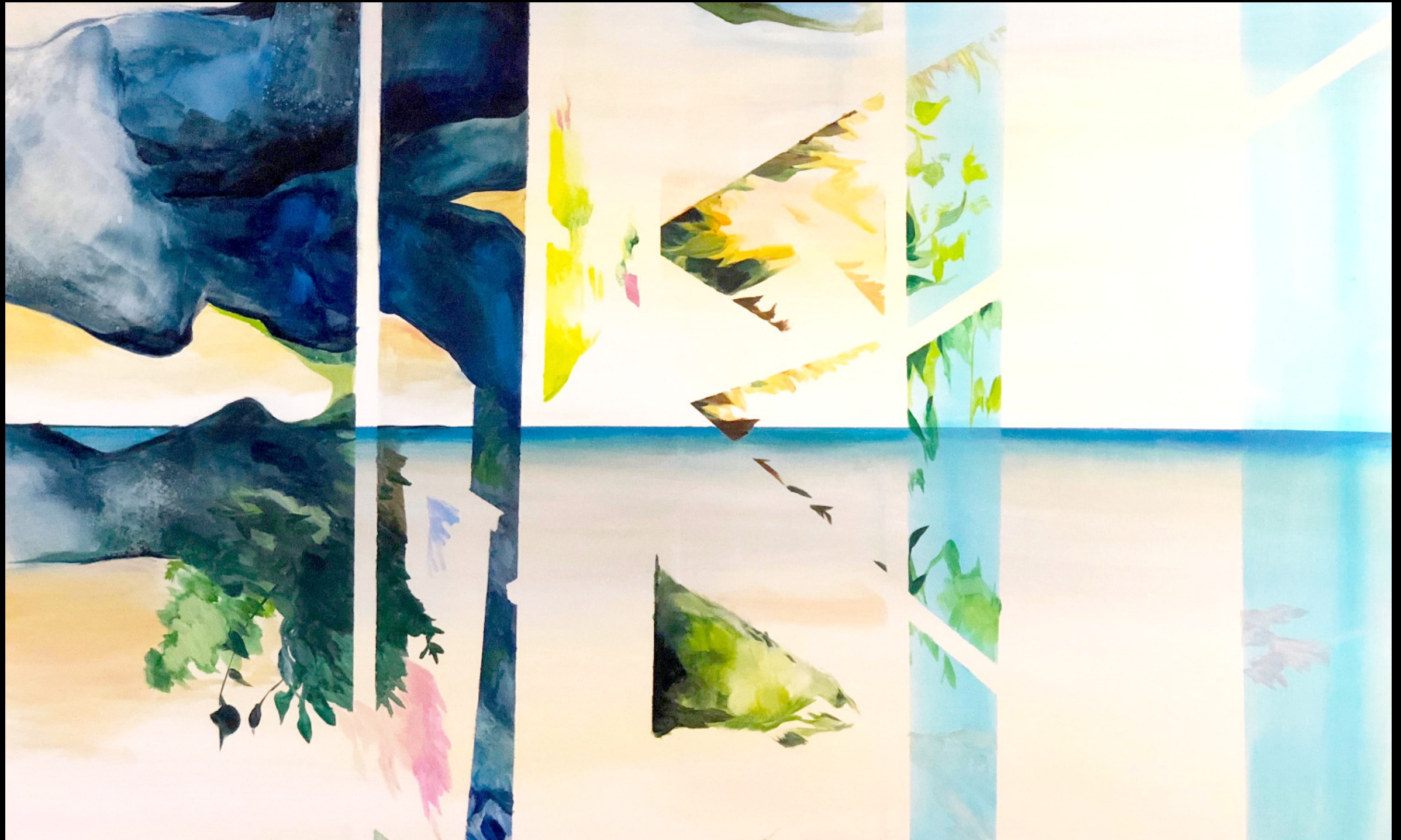
“Phonomnesis of the side of the road on 528 in Florida”, acrylic and ink on canvas on board, 12”x16”.





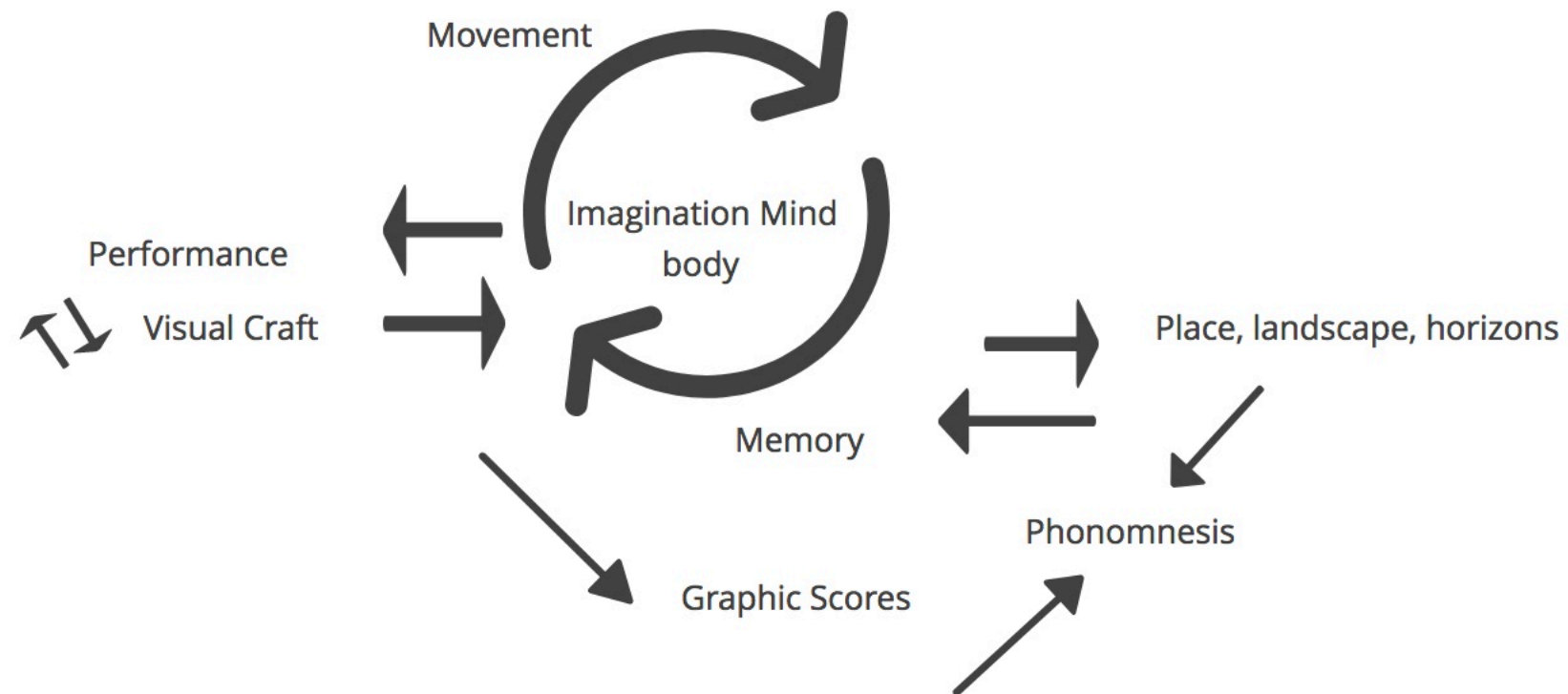
“Phonomnesis of an Internal Meditation”, acrylic and ink on board, 36”x48”.





“Moving My Eyes through Trees- Left and Right Channels”, oil on canvas, 48”x36”.

# Creative Agenda



# Conclusions

- Directions
- Imaginary action, sounds, or movement prompts for any of these.
- Indications of time and Questions of how we represent these ideas in current creative vocabularies.