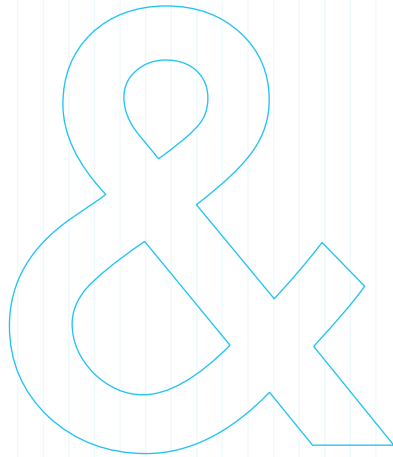
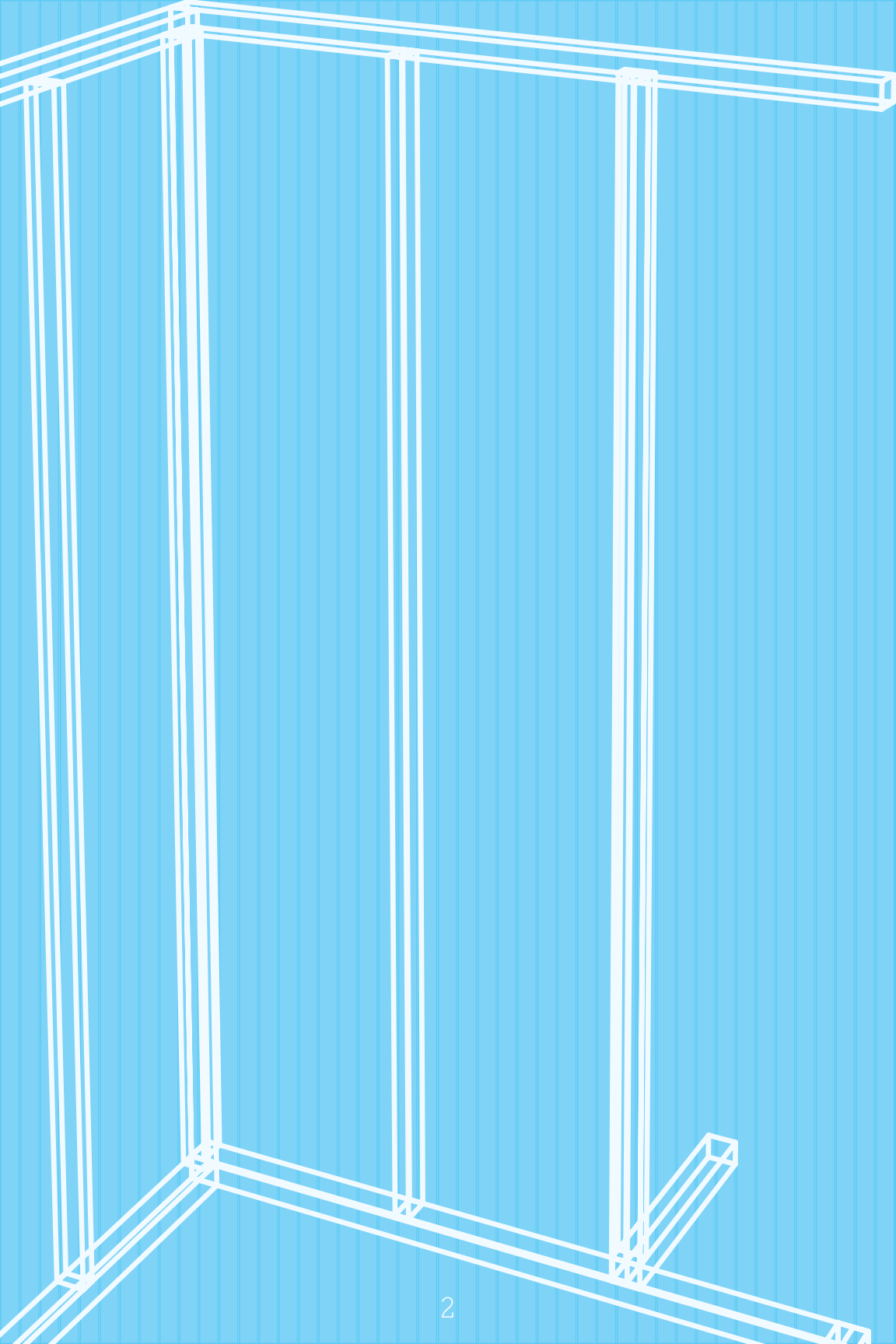


HEAR





HEAR
&
THERE

July 2020

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Artist Statement

The Volatile Parts residency is unique because of the space it occupies. I could not separate working in the studio from the experience of being in someone else's private home. This encounter with the overlapping utility of the room and the day to day interactions with someone else's life lead me to think deeply about the role of architecture and how it shapes our experience of the world and our notion of boundaries. I was confronted with questions around my understanding of the finitude of the interior and how that related to the infinite world outside of it. In order to reconsider my understanding of that space, I created an installation including sound, a structure of provisional

architecture, photography and writing. By inverting the relationships that we assume to be static, encountering the installation questions the simple binary division between the inside and outside. The sound recordings

were made through contact microphones on the windows, sitting on the porch and walking through the neighborhood. The perimeter of

the installation is expanded by broadcasting the audio piece through short throw FM transmitters. While the ambient sound is no longer confined to the architecture, the installation can be encountered both inside and outside the house. Hear and There expands our notion of the world to be one that is not confined by walls but rather is made of the multitude of simultaneous experiences that make up our day to day lives.

The Space of Something

The Space of Something - March 2020*

One of my earliest memories is looking up at the sky and feeling overwhelmed by the vast expanse of space above me. The twinkling stars at some unfathomable distance away from me engendered an anxious wonder. Although this vague memory has been repeated through fragmented flashes in my mind's eye since I was four years old, I can still conjure the feeling of looking into outer space with apprehension. I wasn't the type of kid who revelled in the chance to be outdoors. My favorite memories usually included a playhouse or any structure I could get inside. The giant cardboard box that housed a new refrigerator sparked hours of play. I fantasized about how I wanted to build a house in my backyard. I thought through the specific logistics about how the structure would look and be constructed, exploring all of the nooks and crannies in my mind. The calming sense of safety that an interior space created was palpable even if it was imaginary.

The interior space of architecture has the unique ability to create that feeling of security, or what feels like security to me. In other contexts and for other people, that sense of

an interior space may be far more complicated. But regardless of the personal associations with the notion of being inside, it is clear there is a different psychological experience created by being inside a structure. We can feel the difference between a low ceiling and a vaulted one, or the transition that comes from walking under an arch creating the sense we are moving through a threshold. We are shaped by the spaces we encounter. Consider the front porches that line the streets of this neighborhood. The roof of the porch provides protection from the elements, but it also creates a transitional space

between the architecture of the home and the unstructured space of the outside. It commands a quasi interior role that is neither fully inside or outside. Sitting on the porch gives rise to the protective effect of the structure and safety of the interior but expands the finitude of that space.

While the porch embodies qualities of both elements of the binary, there is a way in which the inside and the outside create each other by becoming one through the contrast with the other. The emergent process of becoming folds the interior into the exterior and the exterior into the interior, making them indistinguishable from one another. The dualism is making and unmaking itself and negotiating the in-between state. While they sit in opposition to one another, their ontological existences can't be isolated, rather they are consolidated in the encounter of the porch. I am fully inside the architecture and fully surrounded by the outside. The inside and the outside make each other in a way that the porch holds the tension of each without the quantifiable conditioning of either attribute. It negotiates the determinism of the inside with the indeterminate outside.

Considering the making and unmaking of spaces raises questions around the qualities that constitute either one of those. Does an interior space have to be finite to be interior? Is the nature of an interior space that which we can fully

inhabit? Although part of the nature of the interior space is to be a container, one doesn't have to be completely contained by the space to feel the effect of the structure. One can feel an interiority created by a structure that is neither finite nor contained. Even the most minimal open fencing creates the perception of an interior space. This phenomenon is partly to do with the gestalt created by the repeating patterns of the fence, but it also has to do with how that interiority exists in contrast to its opposite. To be inside of something is an orientation that exists only in opposition to an outside.

When considering the difference between the interior and the exterior spaces, I wonder if the distinction can be reduced to the measurable versus the immeasurable. But that simplification omits the amorphous interiors that imply their containment either through permeable boundaries or half built barriers. The tension between the creation of an interior or exterior and the minimum requirement for each is worth exploring. While the creation of those conditions can be structural or psychological, it is the characteristic experience that is in

question. If a post and lintel is the foundational expression of an architectural support, then at what point does that upright and crossbar create an interior? Is the threshold enough to constitute the difference in one space and another? If one were to remove one stone at a time from Stonehenge, when would the interior space dissolve? When would something become nothing?

Architecture is a way of forming a something through containment. A house is built to provide a haven from the outside world. And yet the envelope that contains the domestic space is a fragile one. The drywall, the studs, the insulation, the exterior sheathing create a barrier but any one of those materials is a flimsy protection from the elements. Sitting next to the plate glass window, the outside is kept at bay as I am safely in the interior of the studio. While the glass has properties of both a liquid and a solid, those characteristics are irrelevant to my experience of the material or the way it creates the space I'm inside. From where I'm sitting, it is a barrier between me and the outside

world. I am very much inside this space, this container of something, but the world outside is only an outside in relation to the inside I inhabit. What is the physical threshold that would penetrate the boundary between the space I inhabit and the atmosphere on the other side of the window? Does it require a broken window, a hole in the window, or will a crack suffice? Or is the fallible quality of the liquid glass enough? If contiguous space requires a homogeneity of substance, then the window would have to be broken. The two spaces would have to blend their materiality for them to become one another. But the required blending of materiality also presumes a contrast in substance. The question to consider is whether that contrast in substance is actual or virtual. The understanding of substance and experience on both sides of the window as homogeneous explodes the discrepancy in the dualism of interior and exterior. There no longer are two sides of the window.

Thus far my descriptions have been psychological and physical in nature. The felt experience of the difference between an inside and an outside; an experience determined

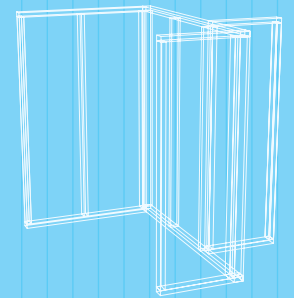
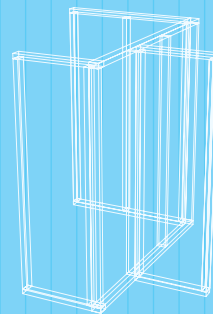
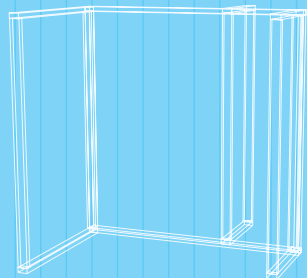
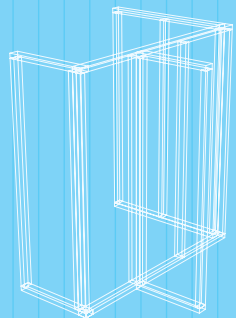
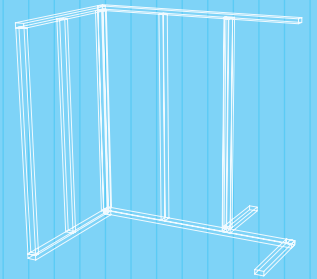
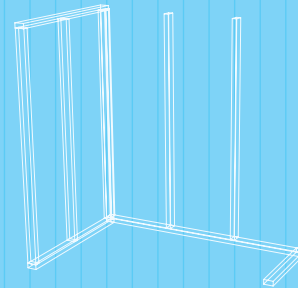
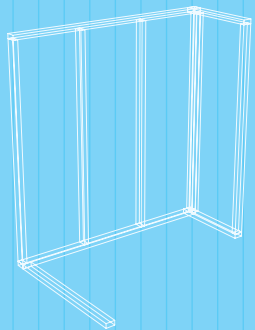
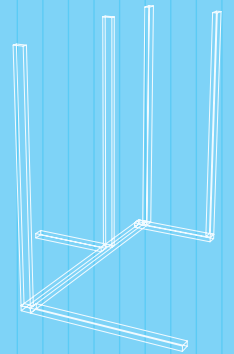
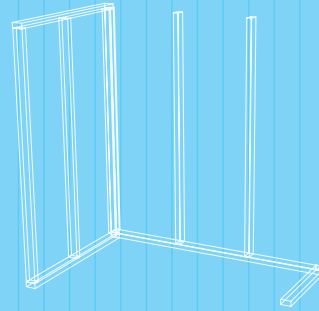
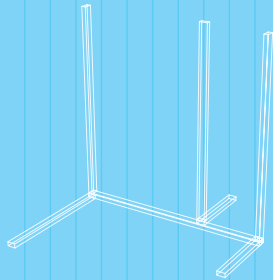
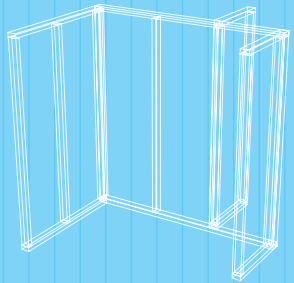
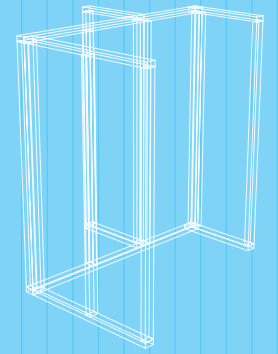
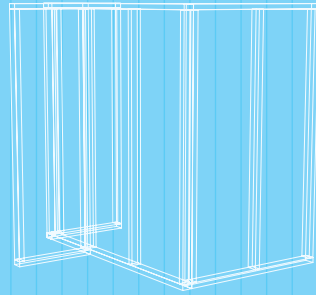
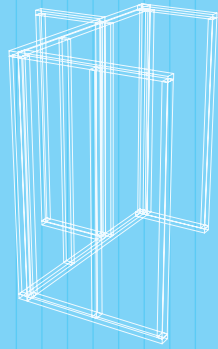
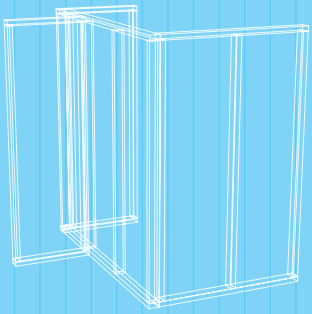
by a structural contrast. But that distinction is not relegated to the architectural space. Being on the outside can almost be thought of as a universal experience. The question of how the outside can be brought in, or how the relationship between the inside and the outside can be problematized, questions our understanding of text, politics and the socioeconomic hierarchy that entralls us. It seems pertinent to expand these ideas of space beyond the physical world of architecture. From a macro perspective, the permeability of geographic space opens up a world without borders, or at least deflates the rationality of those borders. But the physical somethingness contained by architecture can be found relationally as well. The tenuous expression of that something, that inside, is part of what makes it so powerful. If the something is elusive or even ephemeral, then defining the barriers or thresholds that would collapse the binary between the something and nothing is problematic. I can theorize the two sides of the window into a homogeneous space, but can we do that with social relations? While

it would seem that the structural separation is more material, looking at atoms on the quantum level reduces any illusion that the division of space exists in any kind of real physical way. But the interiors and exteriors we experience outside of architecture are far more complicated.

There is also a question here around whether these prepositions only exist in relation to something. Grammatically, they require an object. Maybe isolating 'outside of something' to simply 'outside' is enough to reconsider its relational expression. But can the conflation of this dualism only be debated in the realm of philosophy? Can we conceive of these attributes in other situations, situations that conflate the subject-object relationship beyond this particular conversation? Is it only through the dualistic experience of the porch and the theoretically permeable window that the subject-object relationship is collapsed? Or is there a way to hold these dualities that changes

our experience of the world? The experience of writing and thinking so intensely about this window I stare at and the porch where I have written some of this essay makes me want to generalize some way of thinking or being outside of this house. Out of the questions I have posed the contrast in something versus nothing seems most pertinent. That underlying question which takes my mind back to the active imagination of my childhood is one that looks for some understanding of the something-ness of it all. Somehow this exploration is an attempt to put my arms around that something, to understand how the invisible can still be something, that it's all real.

*I started writing this essay the first week of March with no knowledge of how much would change before I finished it. The Corona Virus has shaped our way of being in the world in ways that we could never have expected, in ways that make me feel as though I can't finish this essay without re-contextualizing it or at least commenting on it. It's particularly interesting that so much of this time has been defined by how we inhabit spaces. We are now more aware than ever of how much time we spend inside, how far apart we need to stay from one another and the effect all of that time and space has on our psychology. This virus has robbed us of the communal experience. We make do with our new routines, but we are all longing for connection. Some of the most powerful moments of our new socially distanced lives come from seeing attempts at connection from afar. Every night at 7 pm people celebrate the first responders and medical workers by clapping and making noise from their balconies in urban areas. The cacophony of shouting and banging on anything that makes noise not only pays tribute to those on the front lines of the crisis, but lets us all know that we are here. We are here, in the same space touched by sound when we cannot be touched by each other. We are experiencing this something together.



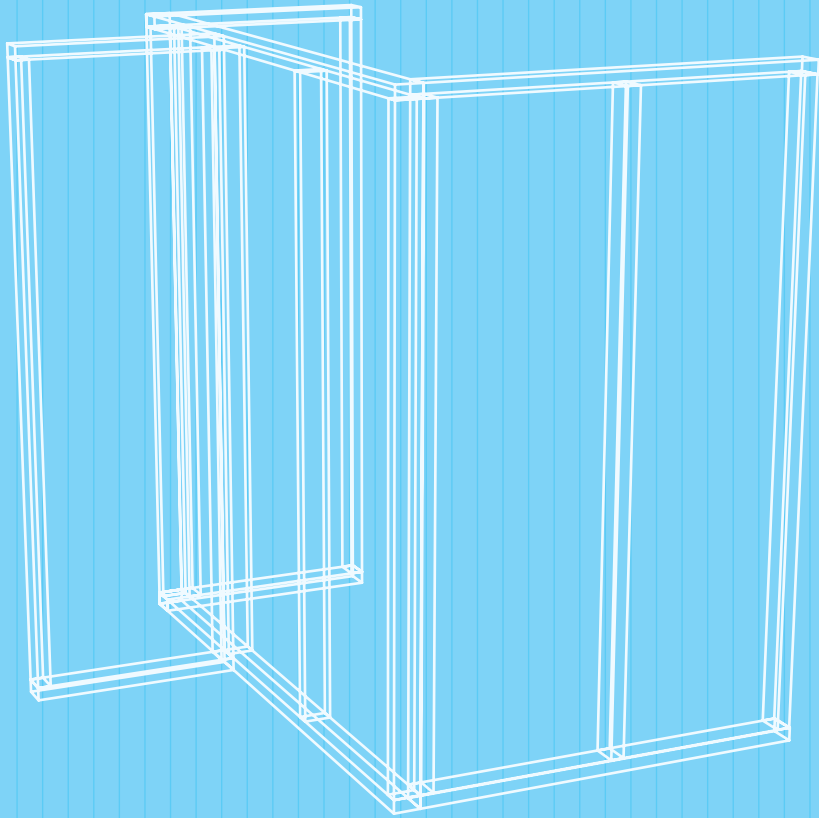


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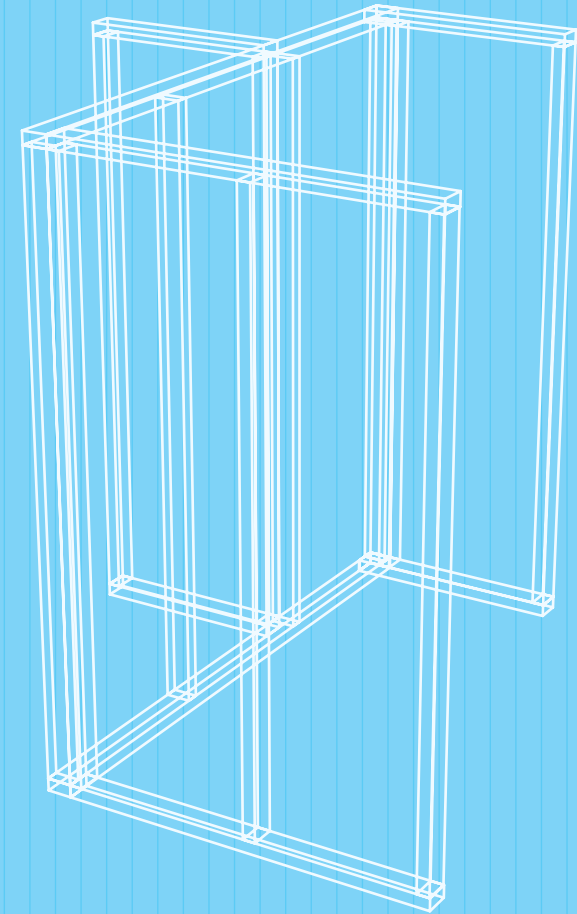


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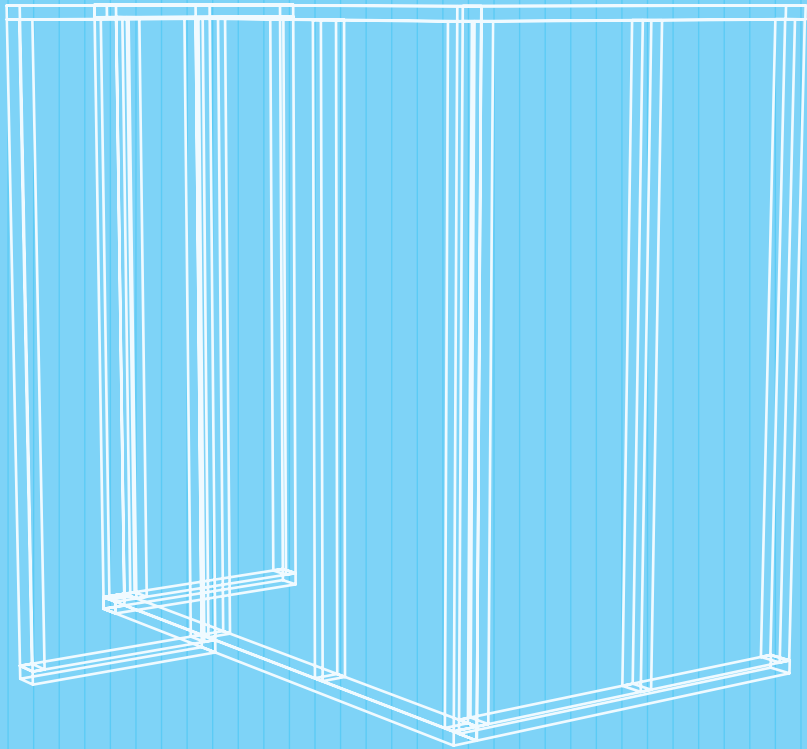


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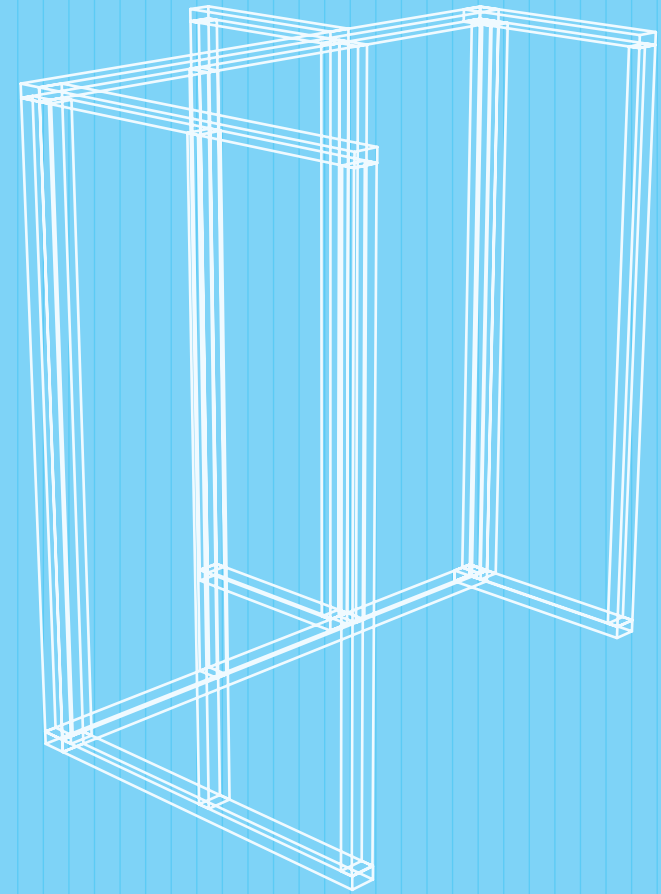


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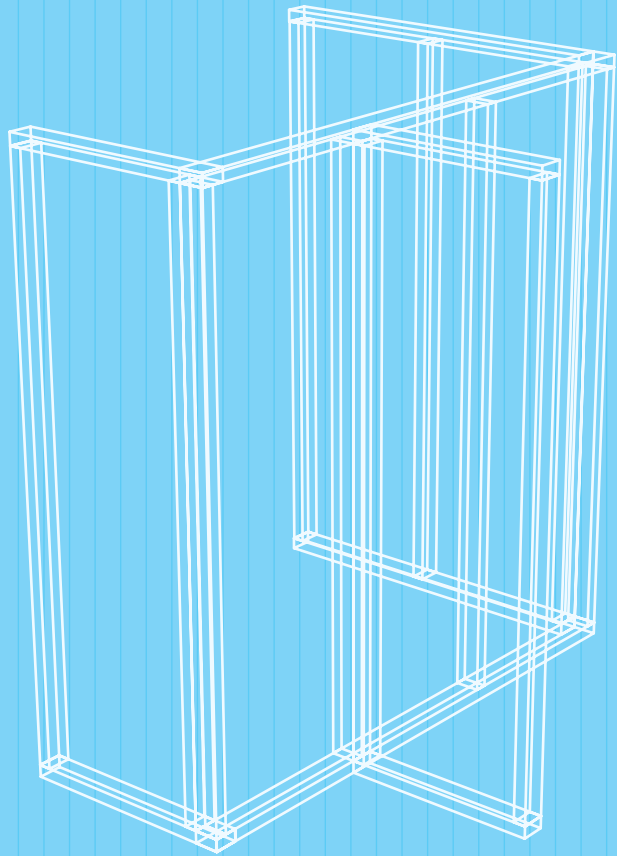


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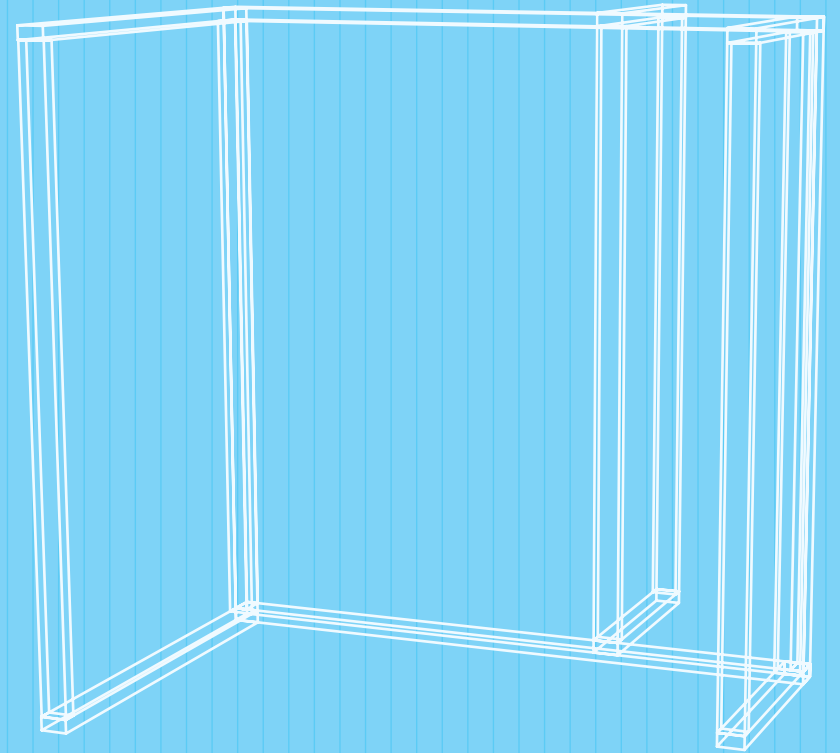


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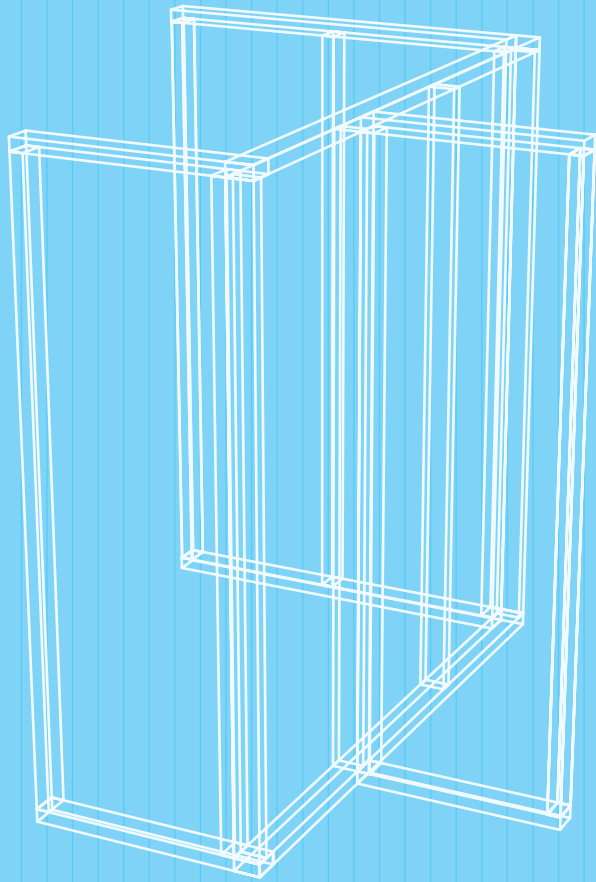


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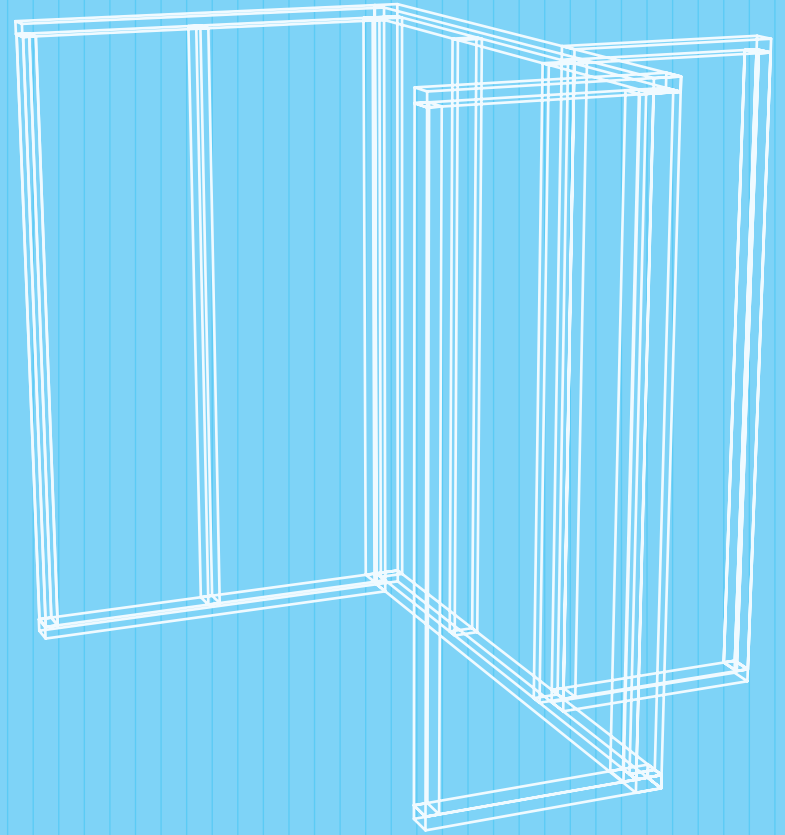


Figure No. 16

The Sound of Something



The Production of Space

87.9 FM

25:32

Footsteps, boards clanging, clanging, footsteps, boards clanging, footsteps, car moving by, or motorbike, bird singing, tweeting, tweeting, tweeting, car, tweeting, vrooom, footsteps, wind, car, tweeting, honk, honk, honk, honk, honk-a, honk-a, honk, honk-a honk-a, honk-a alarm, alarm, alarm, a-larm, a-larm, breathing, footsteps, crunching, louder, softer, ba da duh, ba da duh, tweeting, d-dad-aa, dragging board, scraping on concrete, footsteps, h-mmmmmmmmmmm, h-mmmmmmmmm, tweeting, tweeting, drill, drill, bonk, drill, board, crank, drilling drilling, h-mmmmmmmmm, driiii-iiiling, crunching, walking, draaggiing, twist, drilllllling, drilling, twist, bonk, bonk, bonk, twist, twirrrriilll, tweeting, tweet, tweet, mmmmmhhhhh, drilling, twist, wind, plane flying overhead, oo, dog barking, wind, leaves, mmmmmmmmm, drilling, mmmhhhhhhh, cling, clang, crunch, barking, plane, wind, leaves rustling, drilling, hhmmm, metal hitting, plastic crunching, car moving, drilling, metal clanging, clonk, wind, car, clink, clink, mmmmmmmmmmm, hhhmmmmmmmm, crunch, bonk, bonk, bam, errrrgh, crunch, crunch, pad, crunch, crunch, pad, wind, drilling drilllllling, twist, sigh, sigh, h-mmmmm, tweet, tweet, tweet, vrooommmmmmmmm, walking, crunching, eh-hhhh, h-mmmmm, crunch, wind, hhhmmmm, tweeeeeeeeeeting, drilling, drillllllggg, walking, voices, wind, leaves, leaves, wind, car, drilllllllling, crunch, twe-tweetweeting, scraping, dragging, falling, leaves, walking,



Porch Sounds

96.9 FM

14:49

sirens, birds, ee-eeeeee e-e-e-e-e, ee-eeeeee e-e-e-e-e, crunching of leaves, buzzzzzzin, buzzzzzzzzing mmmmmmmmm, carpenter bees, cars going by, ee-eeee-, e-e-e-e-e-, wind, tweeiirll tweiirrl, birds, wind, buzzz, crow, sirens, weeiiii, weeiit, weeiit, car approaching, Leo, bark, Leon, bark, buzzzz, zzzzzz, zzzzzz, tweeeeting tweeeeting ee-ee-eeeeee e-e-e-e-e-, ee-ee-eeeeee e-e-ee-, car starting, engine, accelerating, louder louder, da-da-da, tweet, tweet, tweet, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, chirp, car door, tweeeet, tweet, ee-e-e-e-e-e-, car, louder, louder, louder, louder, softer, softer, wind, zzzzzz, buzzzz, dog, bark, bark, bark, rough, zzzzz, wind, bark, caw, wind, wind, wind, ba da da da, bark, tweet, ee-eeeeee-eeeeee, zzzz, buzzzz, talking, wind, talking, wind, da-da-da-da-da-da, wirrrta, tweeting, tweeting, barking, zzzzz, buzzzz, car, louder, louder, softer, softer, tweeting, tweeting, tweet, tweeting, barking, whining, eeeeeee, wind, zz-zzz-zzzzzz-zzz, bark, bark, talking, zzzzzzz, talking, wind, wind, wind, talking, when I was, barking, chirp, chirp, chirp, zzzzz, wind, talking, buzzzzzzzz, music, car, siren, tweeeeting, da-da-daaaa-da-da-da-da, ee-ee-eeeeee-e-e-e-e-e-, ee-ee-eeee-eeeeee, ee-ee-eeeeeeeeee-eeeeee, wind, high pitched, wind, why not, ice cream truck, ba da ba da ta da da da daaa ta daa, tweeeeting, crow, ba da ta da da ta da ta da, wind, tweeting, tweeting tweet tweet, car, weed eater, eer ever eeerrrr, eeeeeerrrrrr, vrrrrmmmmmm, eeeeerrrr eeerrr, eer eerrrr, vvvvrrrrr, car, zzzzz, tweee tweee tweee, car



Window Sounds

FM 91.0

13:10

Ti, titt, pipp, pi , pi, da ta, da ta, ti titit, rain, buzzing, mmmmmm,
pii pi, pi, tweet, rain, caw, buzzzzzzzz, squeak, eeeek, eeek, pi, pip,
pa, pi, pi, pa, zzzzzzz, sound of rain on metal, metal, tweeting, twee,
twee, tweeting, rain, rain, rain, on metal, pu pa pa, ta taa, ca-caw,
ca-caw. Air conditioner spinning, bark, ca-caw, tweet, twet, ba da du
da, ba da du da, twe tweet tweet, wiz, sis si, sis, mmmmmm, buzzz, di
did did, ca-caw, pi pi pipi puh pip pi pi pi pi puh puh puh, bonk, bonk,
rain, rain, car, eeek, bike, air conditioning, fan spinning, ba da du dad
daaaaaaaaa, tweet tweet, eeek, ee-ee-ee, coughing, pi pi pi puuuuh, ca-
ca-caaaaaaa, Helen, rain, rain, rain, rain, rain, rain, rain, rain,















In Gratitude

This residency would not have been possible without the foresight and hospitality of Jess Bernhart. Jess and her dog Hattie welcomed me into their home for many weeks after the scheduled ending of the residency. We could not have known how the world would change when the project began in March. The ability to keep creating and thinking while all of the usual structures of life shifted, was a lifeline for me. The casual conversation and company informed the work as much as the space itself. Consistently showing up to the space became a part of the project and has been an important part of my life that I am grateful for.

Installation Hear & There at Volatile Parts March - July 2020

Artist Mary Stuart Hall

Writing Mary Stuart Hall

Proofreading and Copyediting Jess Bernhart

Book Design and Graphic Design (Bureau) Christopher Knowles

Printing Creative Approach

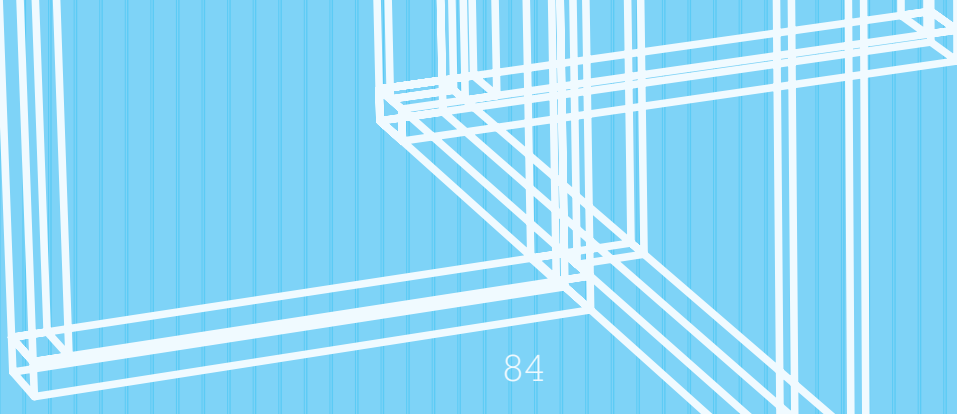
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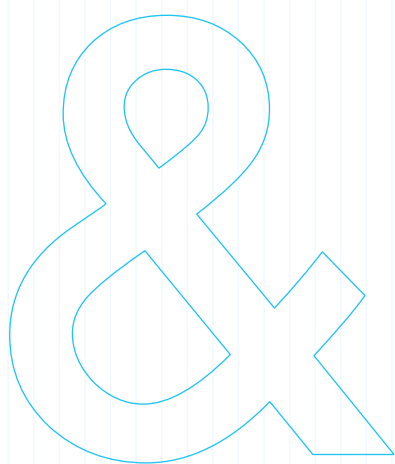
Mary Stuart Hall is a multidisciplinary artist living and working in Atlanta, GA. Her work considers the intersection of landscape, architecture and the production of space.

Graduating with a degree in Studio Art at Sewanee, The University of the South, Mary Stuart Hall then completed a Masters in Art Education from the University of Georgia, and an MFA in Studio Art at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). She teaches visual art at the Galloway School in Atlanta.

She has exhibited work throughout the US and internationally including an award for Best in Show at MINT Gallery's annual juried exhibition. In 2016 she was an artist in residence at the ADAM Lab at Georgia Tech in collaboration with Eyedrum Gallery. In the summer of 2019 she was the MFAST Artist in Residence at the University of the Arts Bremen, Germany where she exhibited at Gallery Flut. Mary Stuart was one of two MICA nominees for the Dedalus Foundation Award for Painting and Sculpture.

Mary Stuart's practice is driven by a desire to give form to the immaterial so that we can experience encounters that are immeasurable.





THERE