

Jo-Anne Velin

The Irish Room / Femmes Sonores

Sound installation with non-stop workshop

Opening: Fri 8 November 2024 at 6 pm

Exhibition: 9 November - 30 November 2024

Finissage: Sat 30 November 2024 from 6pm to 9pm
(open from 12pm)

Opening hours: Wed-Fri 2-6pm, Sat-Sun 12-6pm and by appointment

Special opening hours for the Kolonie Wedding weekend:

Fri 29 November from 2pm - 9pm

Sat 30 November from 12pm - 9pm (finissage from 6pm)

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Press release

Dear Sir or Madam,



Musée des Ondes Emile Berliner, Montreal 2023, © Jo-Anne Velin

The Irish Room / Femmes sonores is a playful sound art installation by Canadian-Québec artist **Jo-Anne Velin** at the COPYRIGHT project space, in which old audio archives of spoken and sung women's voices were used. "My intention was, originally, just to find these rare archives of female voices wherever I could, pull them out of the back catalogues of ethnographic and oral history collections and plunk them right into the middle of a live sound experience now. And I wanted to collapse the decades that separate us from them. I wanted them to count!" (Jo-Anne Velin)

The Irish Room / Femmes sonores began with the discovery online of an important archive of audible samples of "the dying dialects of Ireland" recorded between 1928 and 1931 by German linguist Wilhelm Doegen and his recording technician, Karl Tempel. That team had been hired by an Irish commission shortly after most of the island became the Irish Free State, following decades of violent rebellion against English control. Native speakers were dying out: deaths during the famine fifty years earlier, and migration to find work elsewhere, had shrunk the population by about one third. Out of 137 speakers who left samples of the sound of their language to posterity, only 20 were women.

Imagine the sound of the past without male voices in the archives - there would be almost nothing left! Women were barely recorded at all, by comparison. What would happen if we built a space that created its sonic mass solely from female, and female-identified voices?

Quebec artist Jo-Anne Velin had started working in radio in the Canadian Arctic in the 80ties, and eventually in Europe as a field reporter, broadcast news producer, and independent creative documentary film director, before starting her formal research into the early history of microphones (and their precursors) and women's spoken voices.

"I had just noticed that I was having to mic many, maybe even most, women differently than I would mic deeper, male voices, just to give them more gravitas, more depth. I wanted the audience to notice them and listen. When you hold a microphone close, without a camera, the voice will tend to open up, sounding so much richer and unguarded, more trusting and credible, and that pulls a listener in. This happens even now, even with everyone so used to being recorded with a powerful device sticking out of their own back pocket!" (Jo-Anne Velin)

The Irish Room / Femmes sonores is intended to be experienced in a shared, physical space, live. None of it will be streamed online or recorded for distribution, This is the installation's fourth location, following its launch in Ireland, Canada and and in the Netherlands last and this year. In each new location, additional voice samples collected locally get worked into fresh compositions and peu à peu, the mass of female-voiced sound in the installation's performance space, compounds.

The exhibition is therefore also planned as a **process-based, permanent workshop** in which the artist will be present on site. In addition, there will be three evening events with invited guest artists and speakers. Current dates can be found on the website (www.copyrightberlin.de).

Group bookings are also possible, including for school groups. Please contact the artist directly at velinraconte@gmail.com. (Enquiries can be made in German, English or French).

The exhibition ends on 30 November 2024 with a finissage from 6-9 pm parallel to the Kolonie Wedding weekend (see special opening hours).

All access to the exhibition and all events are free of charge for the public.

The art project is supported by the **Canada Council for the Arts, the Irish Embassy Berlin and the Québec Government Office to Germany**. Thanks also to the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin for the free use of the digital versions of their relevant archives.

We cordially invite you to the **opening on Friday, 8 November 2024**, from **6pm to 9pm** and would be delighted to welcome you in person.

You are also welcome to take the opportunity for a **press preview** in the presence of the artist on Wed. and Thu. 6 and 7 November between 12 noon and 8 pm. Please register for this at velinraconte@gmail.com.

We will be happy to send you further images on request.

With kind regards



Patrick Huber

This art project is supported by:



Conseil des arts
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for the Arts



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