

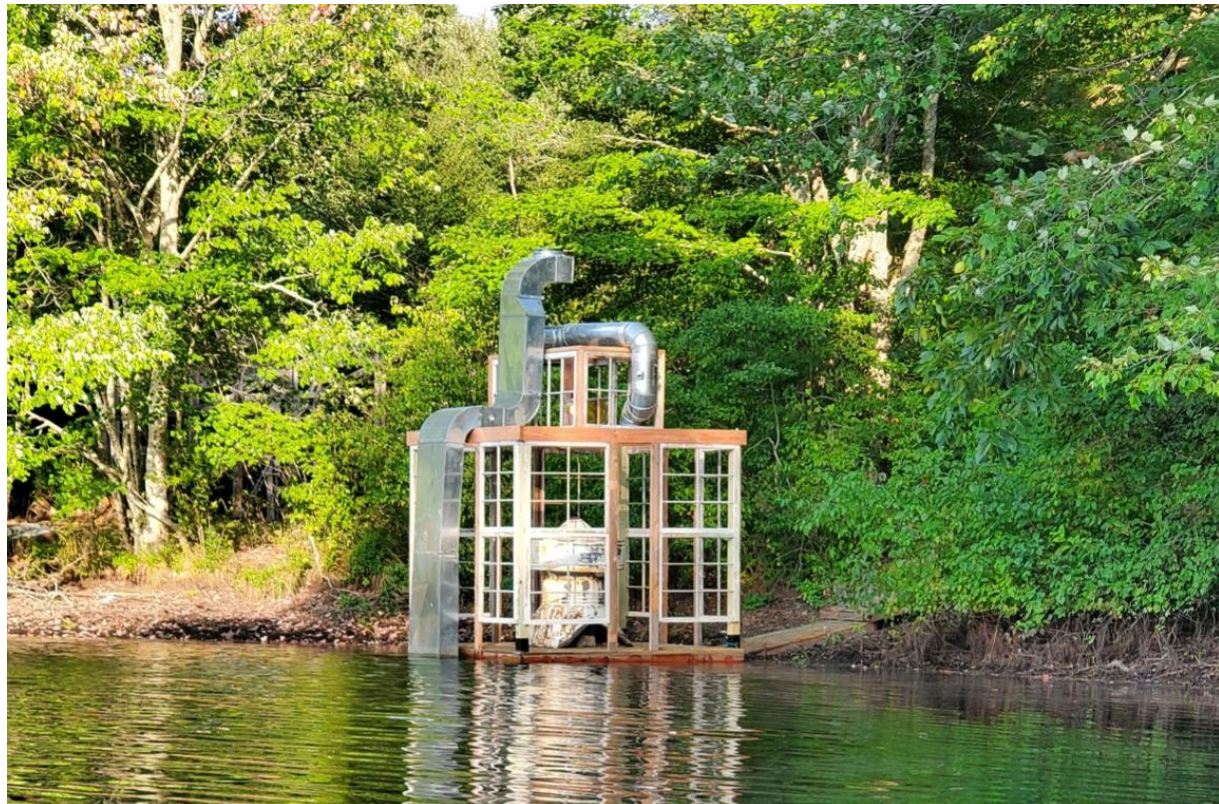
Anja Ulfeldt

Artist Statement: Through visual, auditory, and haptic interaction, my goal is to craft situations that question the nature of human habitats and reveal how these built environments shape our well being and connections to each other. Stemming from an underlying fascination with invention, my practice looks at the ephemeral nature of resources and infrastructure that feed, house and nurture our bodies directly. This includes simple technology such as plumbing and electricity as well as less tangible resources such as time, creative space, and community. Recent subject matter draws parallels between physical structures and economic or political frameworks with a focus on the concept of stability, mobility and personal agency.

Time and presence are consistent themes in my artwork—both the presence of the work itself, and that of the audience. Through this pursuit, I have become captivated by the idea of the moment as a period of undefined duration but also as an event of great importance. Using salvage and ephemeral materials to investigate my surroundings, I look for ways to foster thoughtful relationships with emerging and declining technologies through poetic, playful, and contemplative interaction with objects and sound. For me, this kind of hands-on experimentation provides intimacy with the physical world. I want my installations to exist in their own perpetual moment, creating a collective durational experience while remaining urgently present.

Bio: Anja Ulfeldt is an artist, educator, and curator with a hybrid practice that floats between installation, performance, and unconventional art facilitation. Anja grew up in Berkeley, CA, and earned her BFA from California College of the Arts in 2001 and her MFA from Stanford University in 2014. She's a founding member of two artist-run alternative spaces in California, one a Mojave Desert based curatorial project and the other a floating venue for visual art, research and performance built atop a converted potato barge in the Sacramento River Delta. She's a recipient of VBC Artist Award and Residency at Headlands Center for the Arts, the Visions from the New California Award, the TSFF & SOMArts Murphy and Cadogan Contemporary Art Award, The AAF/Seebacher Prize for Fine Arts, and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Finalist Award.

Anja is currently a Lecturer at Stanford University in the areas of Sculpture and Emerging Technology. She has exhibited in the Bay Area at SLAC National Laboratory, Pro Arts Gallery, Kala Art Institute, SOMArts, Root Division, The Museum of Craft & Design. Ulfeldt's work has been collected by the Exploratorium Museum in San Francisco, Esplora National Interactive Science Centre in Malta, and Recology San Francisco among others.



Untitled (Remnants)

Date: 2022

Medium: Floating Sound Sculpture

Materials: Found windows, ducting, vents, wood, custom electronics, and audio

Dimensions: 4.3m x 2.6m x 3m

Video: <https://vimeo.com/750167000>

Description: This site responsive piece was the product of a 2 ½ week residency and I-Park Foundation in East Haddam, CT. I arrived with an interest in working on the water and spent the first couple of days exploring local salvage materials and responding to the landscape. The piece that emerged resembles the utilitarian architecture of waterfront industrial buildings you might see in New England. The sculpture sits at the water's edge where visitors can board the floating platform and listen to audio from Martin Heidegger's 1952 Essay, A Question Concerning Technology. The essay discusses the emergence of "modern technology" as something different from earlier industrial processes that, because of the modes of thinking and revealing that it employs, measures, codifies, and extracts from nature more than nature can afford. This extraction changes the essence of the resource that it extracts from.



Headlands Residency & Commission

Date: 2021-2022

Medium: Static Electricity Installation

Materials: Stainless steel, glass, biodegradable thermoplastic, natural materials, and custom electronics.

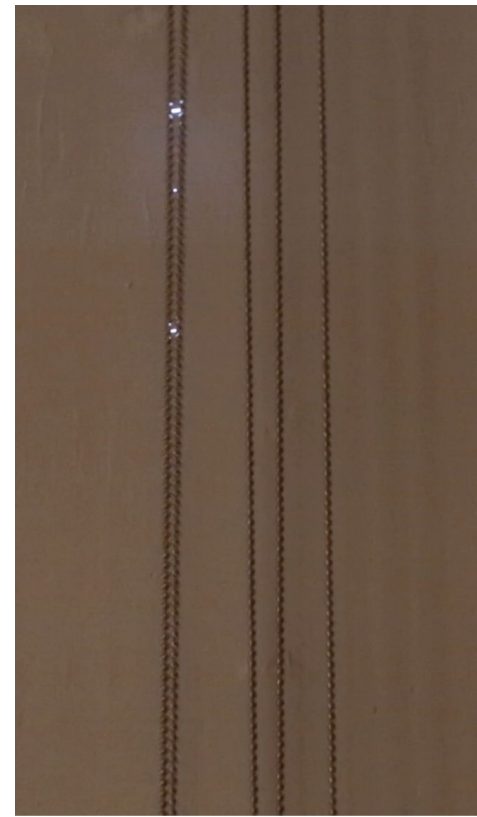
Dimensions: 1.2m x 0.6m x 1m

Video: <https://vimeo.com/750168565> (sound is being generated live by this and other sculptures in the room)

Altered Landscape was started while in residence at Headlands Center for the Arts in the summer of 2021 and then commissioned for installation at their 2022 Auction Exhibition. The work references aspects of the landscape such as roads, bridges, maps, rivers, and surf while functioning as a charged and intermittently balanced system. The suspended stainless steel chain is charged with static electricity and as negative ions move through the installation subtle sounds can be heard, resembling a chorus of electronic sparking crickets. This body of work examines interdependencies between the chosen materials and the electric charges moving through them while drawing parallels between this unstable system and that of ecological, social and emotional stability.

These sculptures exist in a state of frailty, urgency, suspense, and longing. Materials are chosen for their electrical properties, allowing the physics of static electricity to dictate aspects of the form. For instance, the glass and thermoplastic are isolating the metal chain to keep charges from leaking into the floor. The use of spheres allows like charges (static electricity) to collect on the chain rather than dissipate into the air as it would from a metal shape that has edges or points.

For a more technical explanation of this body of work please see my Zoom lecture on static electricity: <https://vimeo.com/606031910/858d261c10>



Night Light (The Companion)

Date: 2021

Medium: Static Electricity Sculpture

Materials: Ball chain and custom electronics

Dimensions: 3.3m x 15cm x 6cm

Video: <https://vimeo.com/750170825>

Tiny sparks jump between long shiny strands of ball chain and, like a shooting star, if you happen to be looking at the right spot, you can catch the spark. The soundscape it creates is reminiscent of a crackling fire with the occasional whipping sound. When I was working in the studio at night I would leave this piece running as my constant companion.

This wall sculpture was prototyped during my 2021 residency at Headlands Center for the Arts in Sausalito, CA. The buildings and grounds have problematic histories as a military base and a sacred Miwok site now managed as federal land. The charged presence of the site led me to work with electricity in its purest form to quite literally charge the space.



Genetic Memory (Sound Sculpture Performance at Root Division Gallery, Spring 2021)

Date: 2021

Medium: Interactive Sound Sculpture & Performable Object

Materials: Found dresser drawers, sand, custom electronics, and audio

Dimensions: 1.2m x 0.6m x 1m

Video: <https://vimeo.com/534196819>

Description: Genetic Memory is a performable sculpture that offers sensual interaction for the purpose of cultivating presence of mind. Often associated with daydreaming, this meditative action of sifting and playing with sand makes connections between muscle memory and conscious memory using the sensations of sound and touch. Discarded furniture remnants reference the clothing they once held and the bodies they once clothed, creating an overlap between indoor and outdoor, micro and macro, the living and the inert.



Domestic Infrastructure Series (Installation View, Museum of Craft & Design, San Francisco)

Date: 2014 - 2018

Medium: Interactive Fountains

Materials: Cast iron drain pipes, antique hand pump, electric pump, wood, steel, plumbing and audio equipment.

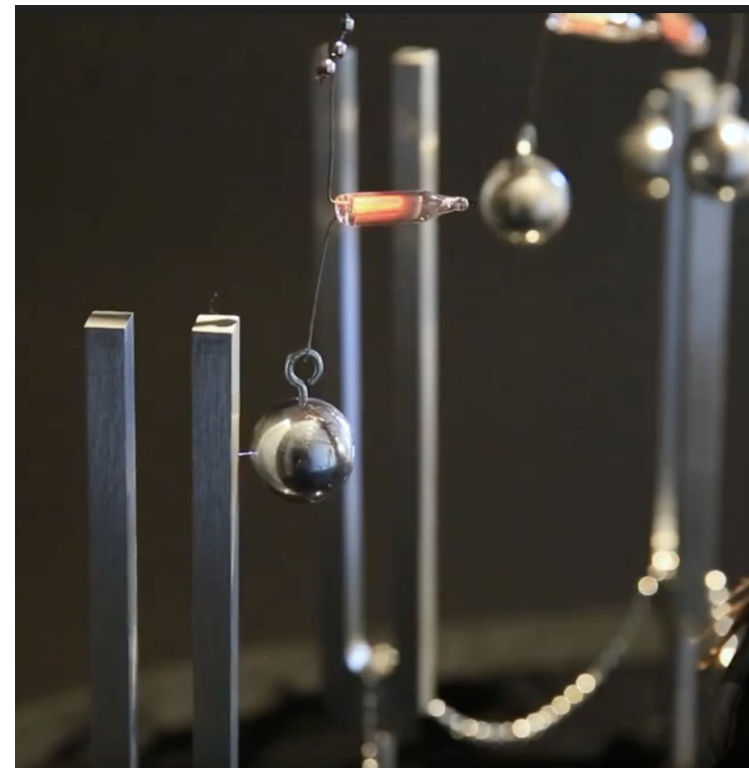
Dimensions: 6.1m x 7.3m x 1.5m

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/domestic>

This series uses live sound, water and domestic plumbing to illustrate a disconnect between reality and perception of water as a resource and the life support systems we take for granted every day.

Gallery visitors are invited to use an antique hand pump to move water through the system and listen to the resulting gurgles and flushing sounds.

Microphones and hydrophones are placed inside the pipes to detect and amplify the movement of water in real time. Attempted repairs in the form of shop rags tied around the joints are unable to stop water from leaking out and dripping down the sculpture.



Lightning Detector

Date: 2018

Medium: Static Electricity Sculpture

Materials: Acrylic, wood, tuning forks, neon light bulbs, rubber, hardware, and custom electronics

Dimensions: 61cm x 61cm x 33cm

Video: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/300208058>

These experiments explore the history and discovery of electricity through encounters with preternatural electrical phenomena such as St Elmo's Fire and Franklin's Bells. *Lightning Detector* reanimates the once living the form of a twisted miniature tree collected from the Calico Mountains in Nevada. The title of the piece refers to early static electricity experiments using a lightning rod and bell to create motion and sound. The metal draped over the branches subtly rings tuning forks in a continuously random melody.

The series combines organic plant and animal materials such as wood and wool and brings them to life, at least in appearance, by taking advantage of dielectric properties in the material. Using negative ion generators I construct visual and sonic scenarios with static electricity sculpture.

For a more technical explanation of this body of work please see my Zoom lecture on static electricity: <https://vimeo.com/606031910/858d261c10>



Extraction (Sonic Well #3)

Date: 2019

Medium: Sound Sculpture

Materials: Latex paint, sand, wood, concrete, custom audio

Dimensions: 1.8m x 2.1m x 1.5m

Description: From the *Controlled Spill* series, this work questions profit motivated decision making with regard to the environment and the future through the intentional creation of “spills” resembling environmental disasters or messy accidents. The soundscape is a 12 minute composition made from field recordings of industrial pumping equipment and water moving through pipes. Once every 12 minutes a resounding “glitch” sound is emitted that sounds like a scrambled signal or alarm. This interruption lets us know that this situation is urgent and cannot be ignored.



Emotional Bounds

Date: 2020

Medium: Browser based portrait generator using AI and facial recognition

Dimensions: Variable

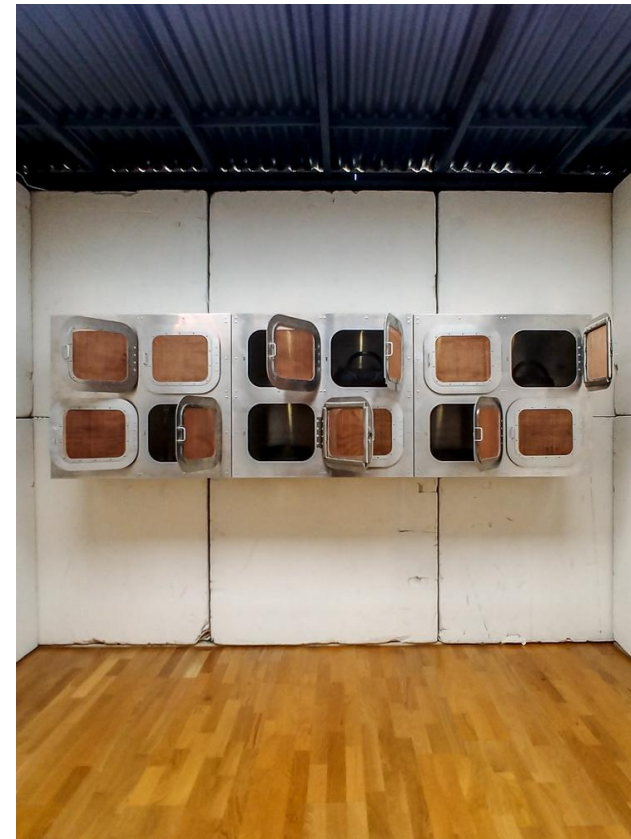
Project Site: **Please view in Chrome** <https://joels-share.s3.amazonaws.com/emotional-bounds/prototype/index.html>

Collaborators: [Anja Ulfeldt](#), [Joel Simon](#), [Primavera De Filippi](#)

Instructions: In between moments can't be forced, leave the project running while you work, chat, email, or whatever you do at your device and check back periodically to see your portrait collage emerge. When you like it, download using the buttons in the top left. **Hint: To jumpstart the process try making some crazy faces into the camera!**

Description: Using an emotional classifier, the Emotional Bounds project consensually observes participants over time while they work at their devices and records only unclassified and uncertain facial expressions. Mapping beyond the bounds of classification allows users to create an intimate understanding of their own spaces of expression.

The datafication of every action or behavior online invites the progressive institutionalization of all aspects of life, including our emotions. Face recognition software is designed to identify, sort and classify images based on a particular set of predefined moods. By repurposing limitations and reimagining them as creative entry points, our goal is to generate intimate emotional portraits composed of expressions that cannot be easily classified in that they belong to a richer spectrum of human experience. Images are not collected or stored but rather persist only if the participant chooses to download their data set and re contribute it to the project.



Selectively Informed/Radio Hut

Date: 2019

Medium: Interactive Installation

Materials: Salvaged styrofoam, salvaged flooring, steel, wood, fiberglass, aluminum, copper, radios, transmitters, custom electronics

Dimensions: 12'x13'x9.5'

Video: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/389163049>

Description: *Selectively Informed* investigates the phenomenon of selective truth in media by examining the roots of wireless communication beginning with radio. The installation contains 12 faraday cages with "caged" radios whose voices can be released by opening the doors and silenced by closing them again. Content includes transmissions on the public airwaves as well as locally transmitted sound-based works by the artist and her collaborators.



Singing Sands

Date: 2019

Medium: Performable Installation

Materials: Salvaged trailer, water, sand, microphones, transducers, custom electronics

Dimensions: 3m x 4.78m x 2.74m

Video: <https://vimeo.com/333017759>

A site specific installation created for Incantations 2019, presented by Mojave Sound Art. The camping trailer can be seen as a symbol of freedom and mobility as well as a landing place of last resort. Singing Sands is a found-object sound sculpture in the form of a trailer that has been allowed to decay in the harsh desert environment. Inside the dwelling, objects are brought (back) to life through sound, movement, and interaction. A "radio" plays softly in the uninhabited space. Sand covers the surfaces while water drips from an unknowable source. Visitors are invited to enter and interact through tactile exploration. All audio is live and interactive with the exception of the "radio" which is playing selected philosophy texts recorded using voice to text applications. The video includes audio from Martin Heidegger's Essay, A Question Concerning Technology.



Neon Pendulum

Date: 2021

Medium: Static Electricity, Sound, and Light Sculpture

Materials: Neon Tube, found materials, custom electronics

Dimensions: 50cm x 33cm x 8cm

Video: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/526969725>

Description: Electric charges cause a tiny ball and chain to swing, giving just enough of a spark to light an old neon tube. The sound of sparks and metal clinking is subtle and repetitive but never the same twice. For a more technical explanation of this body of work please see my Zoom lecture on static electricity: <https://vimeo.com/606031910/858d261c10>



Perpetual Moment

Date: 2018

Medium: Static Electricity, Sound, and Light Sculpture

Materials: Ostrich feather, neon light bulbs, acrylic, found materials, custom electronics

Dimensions: 48cm x 49cm x 20cm

Video: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/526969725>

Description: A delicate ostrich feather moves with pulses of electricity as objects inside the enclosure move by forces unseen. This is the phenomenon of static electricity charging metal parts and causing them to swing. When the chain of tiny lights touches the sphere it grounds and the electric field around the whole sculpture discharges, pulling the feather back into form.

These sculptures are animated by static electric charges that are around us all the time. The objects used in this series become stand-ins for living beings that operate within repeating cycles.

For a more technical explanation of this body of work please see my Zoom lecture on static electricity: <https://vimeo.com/606031910/858d261c10>



The Hustle

Date: 2015

Medium: Performable Object

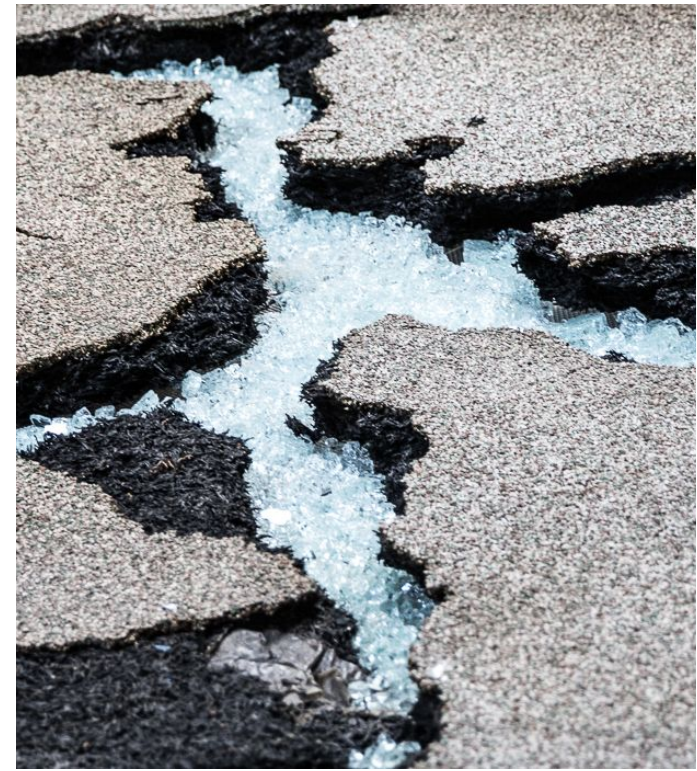
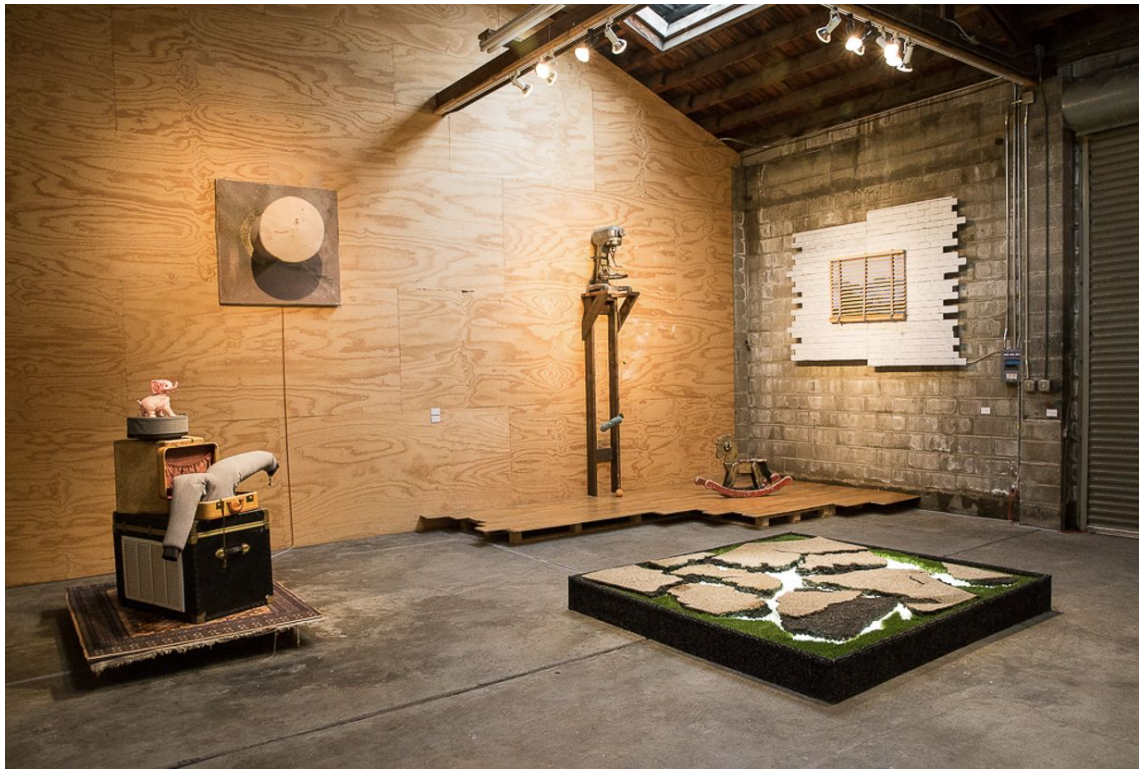
Materials: Steel, reclaimed wood and upholstery, mechanical parts

Dimensions: 2.6m x 4.6m x 2.8m

Video: <https://www.anjaufeldt.com/the-hustle>

A large scale free-standing sculpture, *The Hustle*, invites visitors to enter one of two walks of life: one a fast-moving hustle, the other a seductively soft place of comfort. The work foregrounds the increasing wealth gap in the United States and the tenuous financial position of many communities. One wheel is for running and the other is for resting- but if you rest, you will be upended by those with continued mobility.

These take the form of two rotary drums connected by a gearbox and drive chain. The gearing is designed so that the movement of the fast-paced climbers eventually destabilizes those resting on the slow-moving side. These artworks are not passive objects, but rather they demand our awareness of the value of human labor. They examine the way we as a society assign value, build value systems, and accumulate perceived wealth.



Beyond Repair (Solo Exhibition at Recology San Francisco Artist in Residence Program)

Date: 2017

Medium: Found Object Mechanical Sculpture

Materials: Objects and materials retrieved from the Recology San Francisco Transfer Station

Dimensions: Variable

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/beyond-repair>

This exhibition was the culmination of a four month residency during which artists scavenge from the "dump" and create new works made from 95% reclaimed materials found at the Recology San Francisco Transfer Station.

Simultaneously enhancing and subverting a sense of place, Ulfeldt renders uncanny the most basic infrastructure such as flooring, windows and vents to create a questionable and changeable psychological space. By upending expectations, Ulfeldt constructs an environment that is seemingly free of authority and open to doubt. But alongside this uncertainty, she also provides opportunities for viewers to escape into the poetics of small moments. Objects move by forces unseen, what we think we are watching is not quite as it appears, and our perceptions are given free rein to shift from the real to the fantastic.



Mirage (video still from documentation) Installed during *Incantations* 2018, Wonder Valley, 29 Palms, CA

Date: 2018

Medium: Sound sculpture and public intervention

Materials: Plastic tank, water, mirrors, speakers, pipes, and custom audio. Dimensions: Above Ground: 15' x 13" x 13" Below ground: 22" x 16" x 16"

Video: <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/274989967>

Taking the form of an imaginary "well" in the desert, *Mirage* addresses concerns about water security and water rights as applied to ancient aquifers and shared water tables in the Western United States.



Untitled Resting Place #2 (How Can you Sleep at Night)

Date: 2015

Medium: Public intervention and performance

Materials: Street mattress, transducer, amplifier, cables and headphones

Dimensions: 23cm x 183cm x 152cm

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/untitled-resting-place-2>

Oakland has become known for its expanding wealth gap and growing numbers of persons experiencing homelessness. This performable installation asks participants to take on the role of someone who is sleeping on the streets through an unexpected experience with sound.

At first glance *Untitled Resting Place # 2* could easily be dismissed as a piece of garbage on the edge of a parking lot. Upon further investigation, a pair of headphones can be located with a cord coming out from beneath the springs of the old rusty mattress. When the headphones are worn, the participant can hear vibrations and resonant frequencies of the metal springs as they react to movement and touch. The resulting soundscape resembles a cacophony sound echoing through an interior space.



Watering Hole (video still from documentation) Installed at ZK/U, The Center for Art and Urbanistics in Berlin, Germany

Date: 2016

Medium: Sound sculpture and public intervention

Materials: Plastic tank, water, mirrors, speakers, pipes, and custom audio. Dimensions: Above Ground: 19' x 15" x 17" Below ground: 32" x 19" x 19"

Video: <https://vimeo.com/274982017>

The term "watering hole" refers to a natural body of water where populations go to drink and is also another word for a pub. In urban environments, bodies of water are often man made and have a role to play for transportation, recreation and ecosystems. I'm particularly interested in the behavior of man made bodies of water within urban environments, especially the psychological connection with the aesthetics and sound of water. *Watering Hole* is a sculptural intervention alluding to the form and function of a well although the existence of a water source is, in this case, an illusion. This work looks at water as a metaphor for the needs of a population and as it operates in the hydrosphere, through the creation of a constructed body of water for aesthetic interaction.



Time Machines 1-4

Date: 2015

Medium: Durational Installation

Materials: Wood, scratch resistant polycarbonate, donated personal possessions, hardware, custom electronics

Dimensions: 61cm x 61cm x 33cm each

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/time-machines-1-4>

Four wall-mounted sculptures act as something akin to a rock tumbler, accelerating the process of daily wear and tear on objects donated by the public, gradually doing away with the painful associations and memories surrounding them as they are ceremoniously destroyed. Containing special combinations of these donated specimens of human accumulation, and curated for maximum interaction, these kinetic sculptures move both human and object forward in time. With speeds ranging from 1/10 RPM to 3.5 RPM this installation of rotary devices both measures time and symbolizes its passage.



Witness

Date: 2014

Medium: Durational sound and light installation

Materials: Live streaming audio, high-pressure sodium light, custom electronics, concrete, and dirt.

Dimensions: 6.1m x 1.8m x 1.2m

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/witness>

A salvaged Oakland street light looms over visitors entering the lobby of the Stanford Art Gallery. Standing off center and a bit too tall for the room, this object takes on a stance of not belonging to the space it inhabits thus allowing the fixture to maintain its identity, firmly anchored in some other location and time. Construction of the Interstate 980 Freeway in Oakland, CA, between 1960 and 1985 divided a city and split neighborhoods in two, delineating what would become a severely depressed area. Microphones mounted in a window broadcast ambient street noise into the gallery from this historically violent neighborhood in which my parents owned a small business and I spent my days as a child. Speakers embedded in the ceiling amplify the daily activities of the location 24 hours a day in real time. Birds can be heard chirping over the din of the highway and the sound of car stereo bass, creating the feeling that the soundscape of Oakland's "Ghost Town" is somehow just outside the door, the installation bears vigilant witness to a layered history in public space.



Ice Brain (a collection of thoughts)

Date: 2011

Medium: Self forming ice sculpture

Materials: Salvaged refrigeration unit, copper coils, acrylic, aluminum, custom electronics.

Dimensions: 60cm x 38cm x 25cm

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/ice-brain>

Ice Brain is a salvaged commercial refrigeration unit attached to copper coils and charged with freon gas. The work examines refrigeration technology and its role as a life support system that highlights the frailty of the human body on a changing planet.

The brain-like form goes through a three day life cycle every time the compressor beneath is turned on. As the coils begin to cool, they draw moisture from the air, causing the growing condensation to freeze into sparkly ice crystals. The ice will continue to grow until the refrigeration unit is no longer able to insulate any new layers. Size and growth rate are directly linked to the temperature and humidity of the environment.



Obstacles

Date: 2013

Medium: Performable Object

Materials: Concrete, wood, custom audio equipment.

Dimensions: 28cm x 2.7m x 4.6m

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/obstacles>

Obstacles consists of an interactive 9×15 foot platform made up of 15 individual articulated concrete tiles. Each tile has the ability to tilt by 27 degrees in two directions thus creating a changing surface on which any participant is invited to become a part of the piece and ultimately an impromptu performer. The platform includes speakers, an amplifier and piezoelectric contact microphones embedded in the support structure to emphasize every tilt, creak and thud. A passerby cannot quietly or anonymously cross the walkway. Alternately, our daily routines are truly and decisively interrupted and destabilized as every move is amplified drawing attention to the user and heightening the sense of removal from an everyday experience in public space.



Untitled Resting Place #1

Date: 2014

Medium: Public intervention and performance

Materials: Reclaimed mattress springs, earth and audio equipment

Dimensions: 1.2m x 66cm x 1.8m

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/untitled-resting-place-1>

Untitled Resting Place #1 is a site specific installation created for Mirabel Gardens in Salzburg, Austria. Made from reclaimed bed springs that have been placed below the level of the earth, this physical intervention is located in a place in the park where tourists often stop to rest on the grass. Resonant frequencies of the metal create a soundscape reminiscent of a long hallway or deep shaft. The sound of the mattress springs is amplified to enhance the feeling of unrest in a city where so much attention is focused on the past.

This project was made possible by the Salzburg International Summer Academy of Fine Arts and the American Austrian Foundation.



Preternatural

Date: 2011

Medium: Static Electricity Sculpture

Materials: Acrylic, aluminum, feathers, wood, dielectric materials and components.

Dimensions: Variable

Video: <https://www.anjaulfeldt.com/preternatural>

Human powered generators produce static charges that then activate whimsical sculptures installed in the gallery. Incorporating electrostatic generators hand built by the artist, this body of work explores the role of the experimenter as both magician and scientist in an investigation of behavior of material. Subtle movement and gestures emerge as feathers twitch, light bulbs flicker, and windless chimes ring by no visible force or detectable breeze. As materials are charged with high voltage at low continuous current they become attracted to or repelled by installed components and the bodies of gallery visitors themselves.

For a more technical explanation of this body of work please see my Zoom lecture on static electricity: <https://vimeo.com/606031910/858d261c10>