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Jason Reinier is Sound Artist and CEO of *Earprint Immersive, Inc.* He is a designer, preservationist, and connoisseur of sound who has been creating immersive design projects for museums around the world. He is the curator of each sound stream within the

ClimateGarden 2085 exhibition, adding a layer of sonic density to the

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We spoke to Reinier about the importance of sound and memory — and how climate change is transforming our sonic environment.

WHAT DO YOU DO?

I listen to sounds. I work to preserve, recreate, and express sounds, and create a space where people can hear them.

I've been working in sound design for all of my career. As a young person, I was a musician and composer. I have a degree in Composition and Electronic Music, and that led me to recording.

I realized I could find work doing sound design for exhibitions and galleries. I've worked at the Exploratorium, the Oakland Museum, and other museums doing sound design exhibits, and that led to all these interesting, different ways of using sound to create context for objects.

For example, a history gallery might have historical sounds. We did a soundscape of 1934 in Los Altos, and Sounds of the Great Plains for an exhibition at the Smithsonian: horses running around, wind in the grasses. Sound can give you the full meaning of a place, because it's the simplest way to create immersive effects.

I started doing that 25 years ago. The sounds at ClimateGarden 2085 are part of my experiences, beginning with the Oakland Museum of California's Library of Natural Sounds.

I got to know the different biotic zones in California, and could pore through this incredible library of sound and connect with other sound recorders out there in the field doing really great, important work. So there's this sense of community connected to all of the sounds here.


WHY DO YOU DO IT?

One of the most profound experiences that I've had came after spending time listening to and recording musical sounds using tape-recorded sound loops.

I sat in my house listening to a thunderstorm outside, and it was the most exquisite piece of music. I mean it was just like, wow. I heard all the dimensionality of it: the way the rain hit each separate thing and created a different sound, the flow of the water, the thunder. It was more exquisite than I can describe. It just opened up my ears.

I started listening to things in different ways, diving into sound as music. That led me to all sorts of things. I wrote a piece for trains and saxophones. I recorded the

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The recordings of foghorns here at the ClimateGarden are significant, because the fog is an issue with climate change and redwoods. Juanita (Schläpfer-Miller, artist and science communicator behind ClimateGarden 2085) is showing that these trees are fog-dependent, and that we might already be seeing significantly less fog. That's going to have an impact on how redwoods survive, and how successful they are.

When I think about that, I feel this sense of sadness, and I think the foghorns have this kind of deeply melancholic sound. It draws out the quality of the air in the Bay, and the quality of the experience of walking around San Francisco and hearing these deep singing sounds. That, in combination with nature sounds, is an important statement about the environment.

These recordings at the ClimateGarden are from 30 years ago, just as they were removing air-driven foghorns. They were hard to maintain, they were beginning to deteriorate, and they couldn't keep them running. They required this blast of air to run, and the mechanics of that became almost unsustainable.

So they were going to replace them with electronic foghorns, which just go *beep*, *beep*. You know, really boring. They don't have any of the aesthetics or soul. You're missing the air part of it, which has soul to it, like they're musical instruments. And so those were being removed, and I decided to take it on and say, OK, we have to go record those sounds before they disappear. So I arranged to go out with the Coast Guard and make a record of it. The sound here was recorded in 1990 – and it doesn't exist anymore.

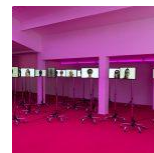
Paying attention to that is important – how does the soundscape change over time? What happens when something disappears? My wife and I, we don't have many birds in our neighborhood. There's natural space, but freeways drown it out. That draws out a sense of loss.

Juanita likes to say there are climate winners and losers. I think the cars are winning. Coyotes are getting hit by cars, birds can't communicate because they're being crowded out by the beepscape. Mockingbirds imitate car alarms.

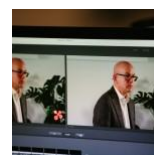
I know at the Climate Garden, you have **solistalgia**. The word I think about is **sonistalgia**, a sound memory. As things get thinner and disappear, we need to be reminded that there was a density – these recordings are from 1990, and the sounds have changed. It draws out a feeling of wanting to preserve it, and that's what I'm trying to do. Preserve it and express it.

HOW DO YOU EXPRESS THAT THROUGH SOUND DESIGN?

The instrument I'm really interested in is the ear. I can walk outside and close my eyes and listen to the music out there – that's the end result I'm looking for. If you



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If you're walking outside, stop and listen. If something is bothering you, don't cut it out, listen. I really want to wake up a sense beyond the filter of pushing away sound. I've had a teacher tell me she listened to a terrible sound on the BART train, and instead of turning away, paid attention – and it was transformative!

I take that sensibility into my design. I want anyone walking through the door to hear individual species of crickets; as they move through, they can hear things the way you hear them in nature, where the sound of a creek can appear or disappear in a single step. So here, we have individual points that are designed to pique your interest, and a few sweet spots that really bring it all together.

I'm also thinking of a word, sonindipity. How do two sounds come together at once? The foghorns are an example, there's this sense of orchestration, rhythm and harmony in naturally occurring sounds that really couldn't be composed. If someone could come here and experience that kind of appreciation of sound, it would be a wonderful thing.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next step I'm thinking about is this concept of real-time experiments, like ClimateGarden 2085. I'm interested in thinking about projecting outward to say, 50 years. Let's create a model for the environment, and create a fully immersive soundscape of what you'd hear in 30 years, 50 years. Put yourself in the shoes of the next generation.

I love the idea of taking immersive reality "snapshots" of an environmental model at different times in history, or even the future. There would have been bears at creeks! And man has built this entire waterfront, and even the man-made sounds – big flapping sails of the boats that used to line up here — could add to the experience.

Through AR, VR or in a gallery space, you could walk into the past or the future and have a full-body immersive experience, just like ClimateGarden 2085. That would be a great way to create empathy and awareness of what might happen in the near future if we don't do something about climate change.

Photo courtesy of Jason Reinier.



INTERVIEW BY

Eryk Salvaggio

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KEATS,**

EXPERIMENTAL

PHILOSOPHER

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