

# AMANDA WHITE: INFINITE SILENCES

*Saturday, October 14, 2017 to Saturday, November 25, 2017*



Modern Fuel is pleased to present *Infinite Silences*, a solo exhibition by Amanda White in our Main Gallery, from October 14 to November 25, 2017.

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 21 from 2-5pm.

View the exhibition booklet, with an essay by Jacquelin Bell [here](#).

## Artist Statement

Biological barriers severely limit our comprehension of the perceptual worlds of others, making the ways in which we survive together often invisible or even unknown. This exhibition is comprised of two distinct yet related works, each in their own way an exploration of the relationship between human and plant life, rooted in our shared terrestrial experience and interdependence, while referencing ideas from science-fiction, architecture, biology and botany.

The title for this exhibition is drawn from Ursula k Le Guin's 1971 short story *Vaster Than Empires and More Slow*. In it, a plant-based planet is visited by a group of humanoid explorers who—upon finding it devoid of animal life—at first describe it dismissively as 'empty.' While invisible to their human senses, the visitors come to learn that the planet possesses a sophisticated interconnected intelligence and functions as a collective super-organism, yet they experience only a world of "Infinite plants...infinite silences".

The first piece in the exhibition, *A Breathing Room* is a living participatory installation, a greenhouse structure containing the approximate number of plants necessary for one person to breathe symbiotically with plant life over a sustained period. Visitors are invited to enter the room one at a time to contemplate and visualize this invisible everyday experience. *A Breathing Room* is both a sanctuary from and a comment on the troubled ecological times we live in. Emphasizing the importance and the fragility of our most fundamental relationship, it is a reminder that breathing is not a singular act performed by an individual, but one of symbiosis with many participants.

*Compositions* is series of cyanotypes (sun prints) and animations based on a collection of invisible movements made by plants. Before the availability of technologies such as time lapse photography and film, the movements of

plants—while suspected—was imperceptible to the human eye. Charles Darwin (assisted by his son Francis) developed an apparatus by which he could trace movements in plants over time (often a day or more) in order to both prove that plants move and also to describe their patterns. In 1880 the project was published as a book titled "The Power of Movement in Plants". The tracings that make up the nearly 200 figures in the book are simplified, directional lines stripped of anything recognizable as 'plant', illustrating only the patterns made by each unique specimen. Here these figures are re-animated and rearranged, suggesting various movement compositions; a silent dance in plant-time, made visible.





## About the Artist

Amanda White is a Toronto-based visual artist who has exhibited her work at galleries such as The Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity, PlugIn ICA, the Harbourfront Centre, the Ontario Science Centre, and Forest City Gallery among others, as well as independently and collaboratively producing many public interventions and engagements. She has participated in residencies including; Food, Water, Life at the Banff Centre, The Neighborhood Spaces Residency Program in Windsor, ON, and most recently at the Klondike Institute for Art and Culture in Dawson City, YT with Brad Isaacs. Recent publications include articles for *esse magazine* (2016), *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* (2017), as well as chapters for three forthcoming edited collections. Amanda earned a BFA from OCADU, an MFA from the University of Windsor, and is currently a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies program at Queen's University.

Plants generously loaned by [Grow Wild: Native Plant Nursery and Ecological Consulting Services](#).

Greenhouse design made in collaboration with architectural designer Matt Knapik.

*A Breathing Room* was made possible by the assistance and support of Brad Isaacs, Jaqueline Bell, Justin Waddel and the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity.

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada