

# **DESCRIBED INTRODUCTION TO**

## ***THE NOISE OF ICEBERGS***

### **BY CAROLINE GAGNÉ**

Born in 1972, Caroline Gagné is a media artist based in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli. Through her career, she has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Quebec, Cuba and Europe. In her practice, she uses video and photography to explore the relationship of the body to the environment.

*The Noise of Icebergs* is an installation created from audio and video recordings made in the St. Lunaire-Griquet region of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula.

The artist examines the relations of scale between an iceberg drifting on the ocean and a boat rocking in the waves.

The installation is made up of a partition which rests directly on the ground, and a large glass pane placed on two black metal brackets. The partition and the glass pane both measure approximately 2.8 metres by 1.6 metres. They are arranged horizontally across from each other, dividing the exhibition space.

A video is projected on the partition, while 5 small black speakers are magnetised to the glass pane. 4 of them are round. The fifth speaker is slightly larger and rectangular, hanging in an upper corner of the glass. A wire runs down from each speaker to the ground.

There is space between the glass and the projection for spectators to walk through. The reflection of the video on the glass captures the attention more than the projection itself. This reflection disappears and reappears as the audience walks around the installation.

The glass periodically shakes due to the low frequencies from the iceberg recording. These vibrations then cause the reflection of the video to flicker.

Now, a description of the video projection. It lasts 18 minutes and plays on a loop. The footage is filmed from a boat, in the distance.

Amidst a slightly choppy sea of brownish water, an iceberg with white, grey and bluish hues floats under

a hazy sky. Its imposing height rises to a plateau marked by multiple hills. On the right side, the height of the iceberg drops dramatically, in a sharp slope. A smaller part of the iceberg stands out in the background. At no time is the boat visible.

The projected images are blurry and in slow motion, as each wave takes an unusually long time to form, rise and dissipate. During the projection, a bird appears in the sky and slowly flies above the iceberg, which takes several minutes in the slowed down video. At certain moments, the image freezes and holds for several seconds before the slow movement of the waves resumes.

Throughout the video, the perspective of the iceberg changes subtly, depending on the height of the waves and the distance separating the iceberg and the boat.

We now invite you to move around the glass pane, in order to listen at different points.

This play of movement echoes, that between the iceberg and the boat during the recording sessions.

Pay attention to the sound of waves lightly lapping the boat, and to the subtle sounds which reveal the human presence on board. Notice the louder noises which suggest the presence of the gigantic iceberg in the distance, but also the silence, which periodically interrupts the soundtrack.

At a time when the slow disappearance of glaciers is accelerating, their melting a consequence of global warming, this work preserves their noise. A sort of

alert, perceptible through poetic and scientific means.

This work by Caroline Gagné asks us to reflect on the precarity of our ecosystems and the impact of our material culture.