

### *Hands, Poetry, and Gloves* (2020) – Short Film, Performance



Screenshots from *Hands, Poetry, and Gloves*

*Hands, Poetry, and Gloves* is a short film crafted from footage of an improvisatory poetry performance I conducted in Tehran during the initial wave of COVID-19. It marks my first exploration of combining poetry, film, and improvisation, aiming to foster dialogue and connection through poetry within a community burdened by pandemic-related restrictions and fear.

Throughout the film, prompts invite viewers to consider how poetry functions in our lives, such as, 'How do we carry and hold onto poetry?' It explores what it means to hold something as intangible as poetry with something as physical as our hands. During the pandemic, hands shifted from symbols of connection to caution. This shift invites viewers to reflect on how poetry—and holding it—can reshape our relationship with touch and closeness, even in trying times.

The film was selected for inclusion in the IF (Improvisation Festival) in 2020, where viewers appreciated its unique intersection of community, art, and shared pandemic experience.

Watch the film here: <https://vimeo.com/872585889>

***Following Birds' Footprints (2021-2023) – Walking Performances, Video***

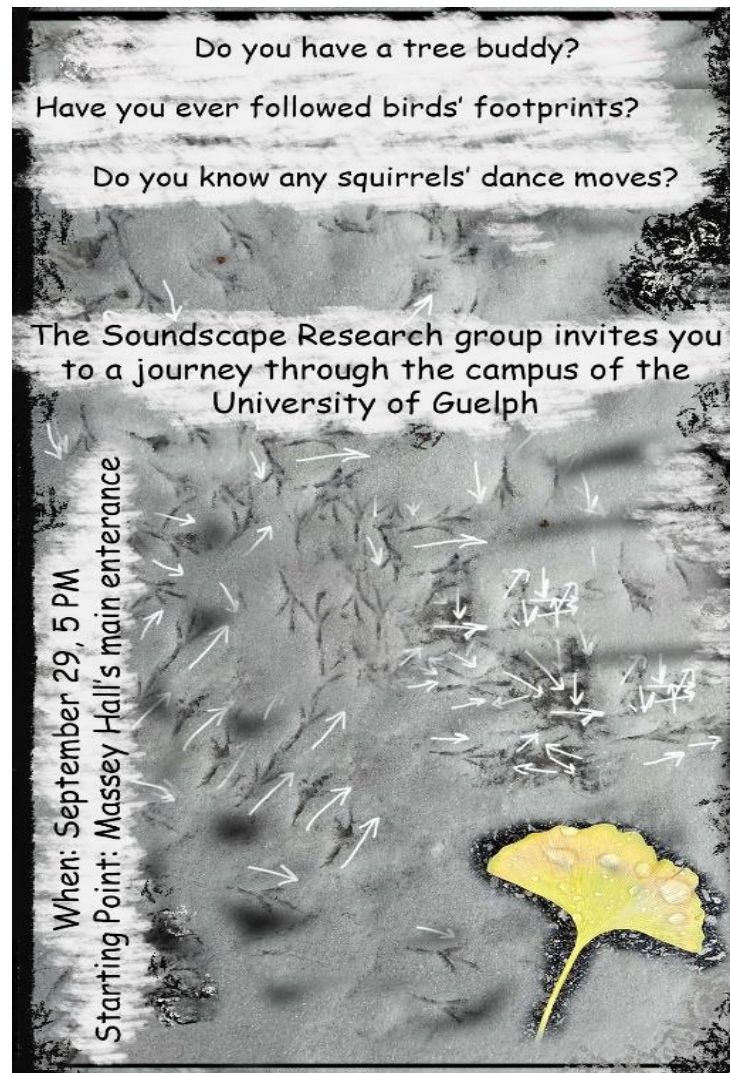


Image of the invitation to the *Following Birds' Footprints* performance

*Following Birds' Footprints* is a multidisciplinary project combining improvisational performances and video as both research methods and artistic expression. The project's name was inspired by a photograph I took of birds' footprints in the snow, which later sparked a series of performances based on this image. Developed as part of collaborative research at the University of Guelph, the project explores how people interact with their surroundings in a campus setting. Through dynamic, sensory engagement with space, it seeks to reveal new perspectives on familiar environments.

## Research and Performance:

The project was developed over two years of research, in collaboration with a fellow researcher, Steve Donnelly, through a series of walking journeys. We studied the campus environment, observed the social and spatial relationships between people and places, and explored how seasonal changes influence these interactions in a region known for its dramatic seasonal shifts.

By inviting participants into an improvisational, interactive performance, the project fostered a shared, community-centered experience. We aimed to encourage participants to form unique, immersive connections with their surroundings, engaging with people, spaces, and natural elements such as plants, animals, and changing weather conditions. Through the performance, we sought to deepen environmental awareness and inspire new ways of experiencing familiar spaces, sparking unexpected encounters and fresh perspectives.

Below, on the left side, is an image of a young participant's drawing, capturing her interpretation of the experience and her relationship to the performance. On the right side, there is a photo of Dr. James Harley, one of the participants, leaning against a tree while listening to an audio installation I created, which is related to trees.

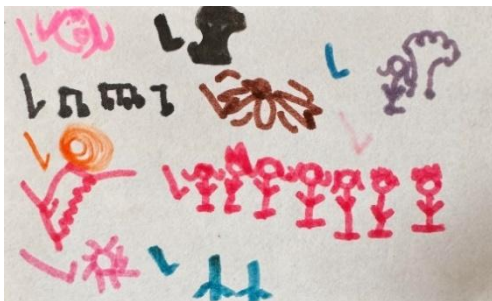


Image of a drawing by Helena Amiri, age 6



Photo from  
the  
*Following  
Birds'  
Footprints*  
performance

## Video

To add another layer of exploration, we used a photo of birds' footprints in the snow as a directional guide. With voice instructions, we followed the paths traced by these footprints across various locations on campus. The following collaged image consists of screenshots from an edited video I created, capturing one of our journeys as we traced the birds' footprints through Massey Hall at



the University of Guelph, highlighting moments of spontaneity and discovery. Following the birds' footprints is performed by Steve Donnelly and me.

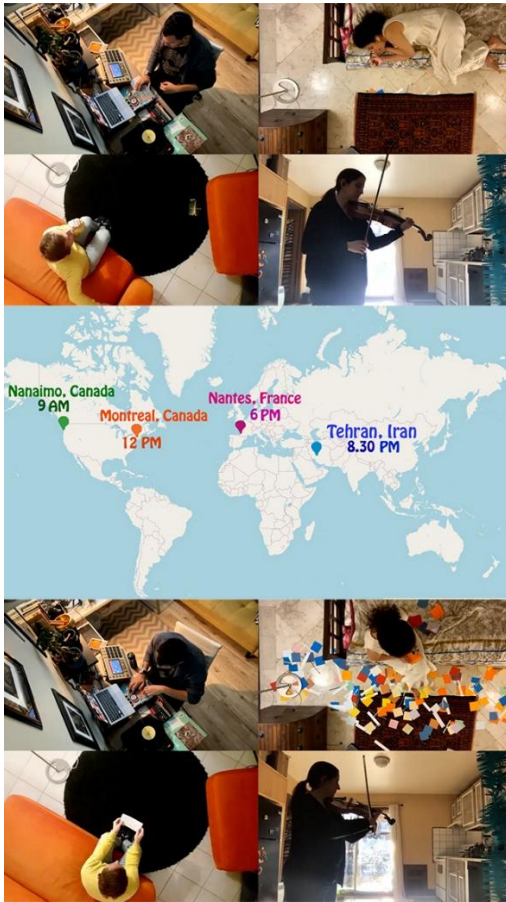


Screenshots from *Following Birds' Footprints*

Below is a link to the same video, inspired by our performances *following the birds' footprints*.

Watch the video here: <https://vimeo.com/869567131>

### *In Virtual Rectangles (2021) – Short Film, Performance*



A collaged image of screenshots from *In Virtual Rectangles*

*In Virtual Rectangles* is a short film crafted from footage of an improvisatory poetry performance I designed, supported by IICSI. Four improvisers—Erwan Noblet, Leila Qashu, Paul Watkins, and I—gathered on Zoom from locations as distant as Nantes (France), Montreal (Canada), Vancouver, and Tehran (Iran), each in different time zones. Amidst the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, this project explores themes of connection and freedom in the face of isolation and confinement.

In this performance, the grid of the Zoom interface became a symbolic border, representing both distance and confinement, while also facilitating a space for meeting and connection.

Despite the geographical, time-based, and linguistic divides, the performers engaged in a poetic dialogue, each expressing their improvisations in various languages and distinct styles, drawing inspiration from Ahmad Shamlou’s poetry in praise of freedom. His verses resonate deeply with the themes of the performance, illustrating the nuanced longing for freedom:

“Ah if freedom sang a song

Minuscule

As the larynx of a bird...” By Ahmad Shamlou

The film was showcased at the Hillside Festival in 2021. The film highlights how art forges connections among people, uniting them even in difficult times.

Watch the film here: <https://vimeo.com/890012409>

### *Phiale* (2021) – Short Film



A collaged image of screenshots from *Phiale*

*Phiale* is a short film I created as an exploration of balance and its delicate, unseen presence in everyday life—a quality that often goes unnoticed until it’s no longer there. The film captures a dynamic, performative exchange between the performer (me) and her surroundings, highlighting the delicate tension between balance and off-balance. This navigation between these states reflects the broader experience of living within yet beyond limits, namely those imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic—a time when boundaries felt more constrained.

To depict the push and pull between these states, I incorporated bridge poses, a physical expression of the tension between balance and off-balance. Audiovisual cross-cutting between my enclosed room and the open outdoors reinforces this interplay, showcasing an additional layer of challenge.

The title *Phiale* draws inspiration from a verse by Hafez. *Phiale* (or *Piale*) refers to a container, such as a wine glass, that carries layers of metaphorical meaning in Hafez’s literature. I interpret the verse as an expression of love’s paradoxical power to create both balance and off-balance within us.

Featured at the 2021 Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA), This piece resonates as an artistic reflection of the resilience and adaptability required during uncertain times.

Watch the film here: <https://vimeo.com/889940568>



## *The Walnut Yarn* (2018) – Short Film



Poster of *The Walnut Yarn*

*The Walnut Yarn* is an experimental short film created as part of my second master's thesis. This project serves as a creative exploration of a multi-layered verse by Rumi:

“You dropped a string, pulled me up to the top  
 I am floating in the sky, the string is cut.”

The film explores the verse's themes — such as creation, connection, separation, and memory — through the depiction of a thread's journey from being hand-dyed to becoming a knot in a carpet.

Juxtaposing the thread's transformation is the story of a young woman, a character I portrayed, who explores her own love story, weaving her memories through a metaphorical lens. Her recollections are intricately linked to the journey of the thread, reflecting the complexities of connection and separation.

## *Pinwheel* (2017) – Short Film



Poster of *Pinwheel*

*Pinwheel* is an experimental short film and part of my second master's thesis. It was my first experience with crosscutting and juxtaposing multiple locations and actions to create parallel, multi-layered worlds—an approach that became a key methodology in my subsequent filmmaking projects.

The film explores the intersection of inner and outer worlds, metaphysical realms, and the everyday through a blend of film, improvisation, and performance art. Half of the film was shot in Montreal (Canada), with the other half recorded in Kashan (Iran).

The film explores how, while we engage with the physical world around us, we simultaneously navigate our thoughts, memories, and dreams.