

Report on Exploration #2

Every living thing on the earth has its own way of sensing the world around them. So are we humans. We are so used sensing the world in our human way, that we think the world is exactly how we sense it. Our senses have become a confinement, a limitation, preventing us from a deeper connection from the world around us. So I built some tools to distort my hearing and visions a little bit, in the hope of breaking free from my senses and reconnecting to my surroundings from a different perspective.



A sound amplifier made of plastic cup

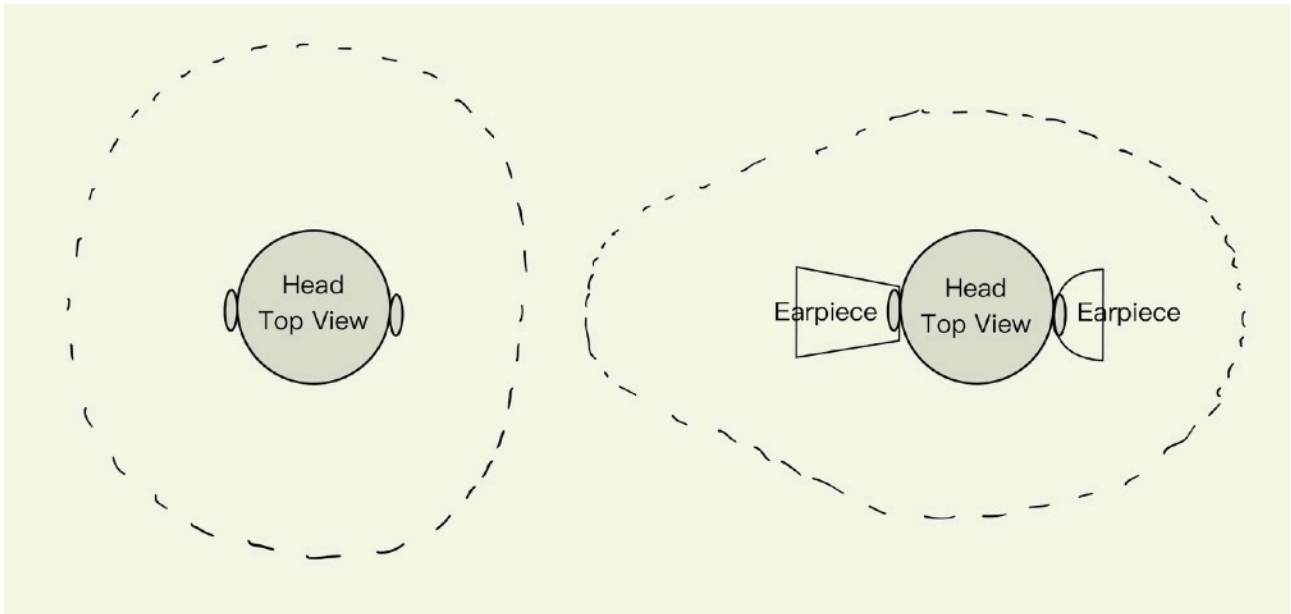
The tools I used to change my hearing were just a plastic coffee cup and its cap. I thought the shape would help collect sound and with different shapes I could better locate the direction of the sound. But it was a typhoon day. The wind was so strong that all I

could hear was the swooshing of the wind. Not only did I hear it, but also I felt it. I just couldn't stop my extended ears from vibrating in the wind. That was when I turned around and saw the plants wiggling in the wind and thought then we were no different in the moment, at the mercy of the wind, unable to control part of our body. That was when I felt connected to the plants.



Plants wiggling in the wind

When the wind died down, I continued my exploration. There were people playing instruments and singing opera (昆曲 maybe). The sound of the opera was so close to me that at first it almost made no difference with or without the tools on my ears. But when I listened carefully, I could hear a small resonance in the earpieces. It made the sound of people a bit strange. And suddenly I felt alienated from human as a species. I asked myself questions like What were the sound they were making? Some kind of ritual? A performance of courtship? A manifestation of their joy or their fear? Sounds carry with them energy and information. Many beings could detect or receive sound because of the energy part. But as for the information part, how would beings interpret the sounds? There were many birds and insects around. Would they ask the same question (of course not in the way we human ask questions, but in their own way). Or maybe they just wanted to decide if the sound meant danger or not? And then I realised that every being had a sound library in its mind. There were all kinds of sounds. But many of them we related to nothing and just ignored them when we heard them. Maybe I should start to pay attention to them and rethink what all the sounds I heard mean, and how they connected me with its generator.



My ability to hear at different angles

And then I kept walking. I heard the sound of mowing on the other side of the river. This time I stopped and turned around and around at the spot. Then I could hear the difference of the sound from different angles. My tool worked better with sounds from afar.

When the wind started to blow again, I tried to catch the sizzling sound of the leaves with my earpiece. I went too close to the plant and my earpiece bumped into them. So I just nuzzled my earpiece against the leaves and got some sounds from them. There were also some branches extended out caressing my other earpiece. I could feel the touch spreading from the earpiece to my real ear. It tickled a little bit. The whole scene was so very intimate. I used to walk past or stand against or sit under a tree. But I had never felt embraced by a tree. Suddenly I understood a tree was not just a tree. It was a system. It was a temple. Ants

climbed on it. Birds rested on it. Cicadas probably waited under its root for the day to come when they would be mature enough to break out onto the surface and enjoy the last but most magnificent summer in their life. And then there was me, leaning into the tree. I felt part of this system, felt connected to every being dependent on the tree, whether I sensed their existence or not. It was the most serene moment of my exploration. I felt tranquil and at home, relieved and free of all worries.



The plants I leaned into



A pair of glasses with mirrors to broaden my vision

Three days later, I went out with my other whatchamacallit, a pair of glasses that could broaden my vision. It was much more noticeable than the other one. So I got much more side glances from aside and behind. With the help the glasses, I could see them clearly, like they were not from aside, but rather right from in front of me. The people might think they were secretly observing me, but in fact I was also observing them. Then blurred was the boundary of observer and observee. I went out on this exploration, thinking I was about to observe things. But how would I know, if the things were not also observing me? To some I could be a sudden shadow from above. To some I could be a place to rest. Or when I stand or walk on the soil, would the creatures underground feel some change of pressure or vibration? With such thoughts buried in mind, I would be more careful when exploring. After all I wouldn't want to be intrusive.

The exploration enlightened me that our senses might necessarily shape how we view the world. But they are, after all, what stand

between us and our surroundings. By temporarily changing our senses, we may view things from a different perspective and achieve a permanent deeper connection with our surroundings.