

VASTE

INK STICKS & STONES

Combining music, film, and photography, artist Ink Sticks & Stones (Ai Rei Dooh-Tousignant) explores both the beauty of the temperate and boreal forests, and the experience of visible minorities from current and ancestral immigration.

Some of the main themes are a reflection of the artist's own experiences as a mixed Chinese-Canadian. The sense of belonging is one that is heavily explored in this project.

The forests of Northern Ontario hearken back to the artist's childhood; the visits to the small village of Génier where her Franco-Ontarian family lived. There, she and her immigrant mother and sister were

welcomed lovingly by the family, but seen as unwelcomed outsiders by some others.

Vaste started with the composition of the music, but the imagery of the woods was the source of inspiration.

The installation comprises of five movements that correspond to each song of the opus. Along with the visuals, they create an intimate and introspective voyage into Ontarian forests through all four seasons.

Vaste transports audiences to a world that is both real and fantasy, familiar and detached, while delicately treating personal experiences that are not always easy to express with words.

Vaste I asks the audience to find peace and stillness in an environment that may not seem welcoming at first. Winter presents a visual blank slate to which colour can be added. The camera starts high up in the trees and slowly descends to the ground, inviting the viewer to enter the forest.

Vaste II conveys a symbiosis both sonically and visually in an East-meets-West fusion. A duet of two erhus (二胡, Chinese violins) take centre stage over a bed of piano and cellos. Together, they try to find their place and each other. Visually, two plants known well in China - 牡丹 (Mudan), red peonies; and 夏花 (Tan Hua), Queen of the Night - are integrated into a Northern Ontario forest.

Vaste III is an homage to the slow growth of trees during the summer months. It is a meditative piece, focusing on the passage of time as felt by trees; slow and steady. The song and video never quite reach a climax, as it is about the journey of growing rather than the destination.

Vaste IV focuses on multiple diverse life forms that exist within small or large ecosystems. The visuals start with macro videography of a small ecosystem, while the music focuses on singular instruments playing polyphonic melodies. As the music becomes more intense, the setting changes to a large forest ecosystem during the colourful fall season.

Vaste V brings the audience all the way to Hudson Bay, soaring over a mostly coniferous forest. The erhu comes back along with a few sporadic coloured trees. These red and yellow trees, that seem to stick out in a sea of green, represent visual minorities in spaces where they are far apart from each other, but still they stand, bringing a different type of beauty to the landscape. The erhu is welcomed by the other strings and manages to integrate itself, finding a place where it belongs, without ever assimilating and losing its identity.



To find the album, scan the QR code,
visit inksticksandstones.com,
or follow @InkXnS on Facebook or Instagram.

This exhibition was made possible with the financial assistance of the



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
An Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario