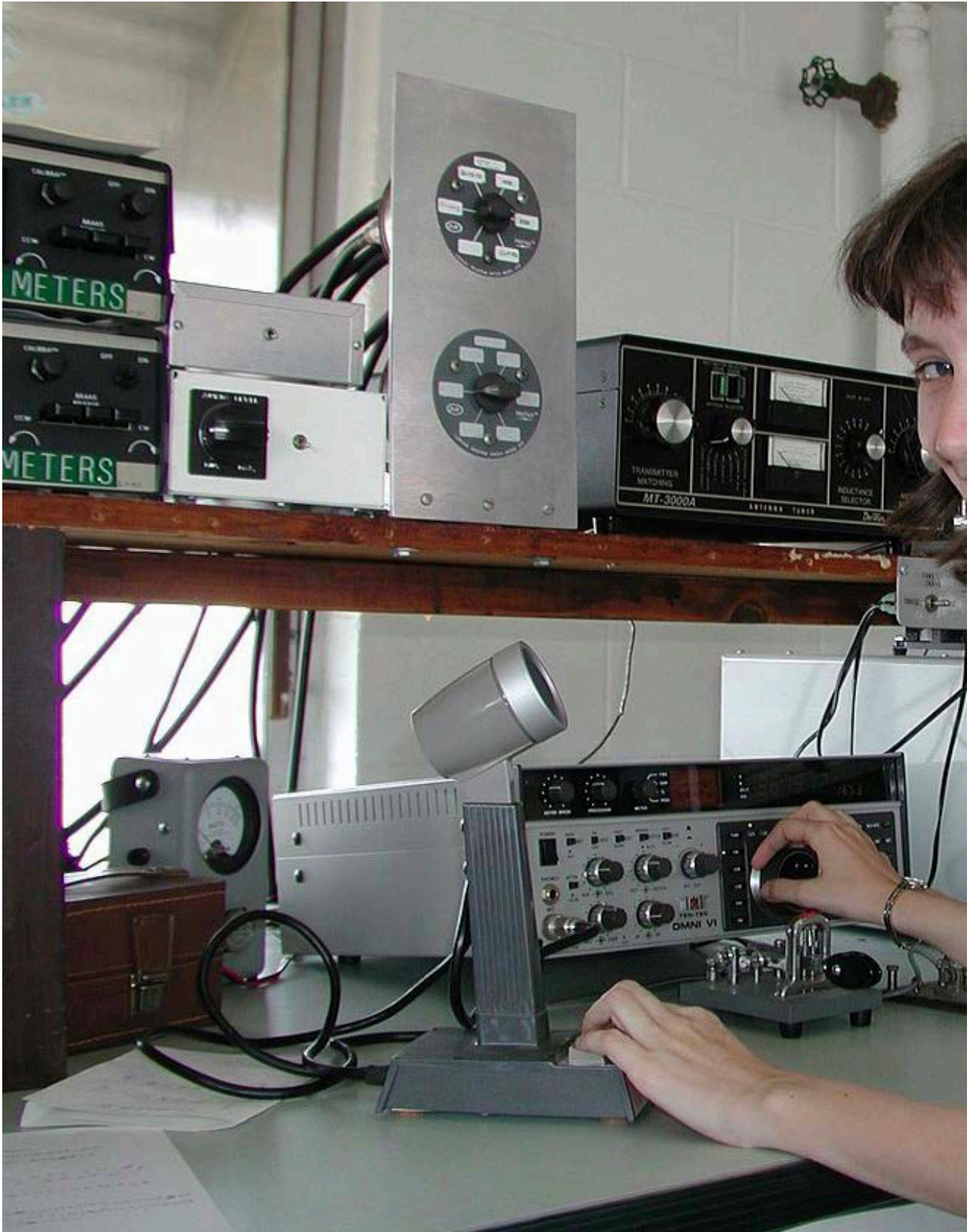


a call and maybe a reply

†



23 - 27 January 2023
11:00 - 18:00

at the time that sun was setting, the ionosphere in the atmosphere reflected the shortwave signal most efficiently. if this window period of communication is missed, it is going to be hard to know when the distant signal will be encountered again next time...

Meanwhile, back in the world, I have a couple of options for how we can use the days that I'm around,

It could be a way to literally vent (breath, air, an outlet of energy) or celebrate, our feelings, our responses to life in certain buildings. Or just consider and reflect on the ordinary and supernatural process by which we communicate with and through the places and spaces that we inhabit. Our work incorporates many aspects of this, in different media, and still involving body and voice. These are things that we came to study. But I'm also keen to try to help you generate your work, to offer a few prompts that might support that process,

Lang's essay film *Riafn* is told in a combination of silences and long distance loud hailing. It documents an early form of social media still used by communities living and working in the high altitude valleys and peaks of the Alps, Europe's highest mountain range. One of the ways in which a sense of place is established here is through a direct form of engagement and collaboration with the incredible world in which it exists,

For the American activist Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf, language was part of a silent and invisible world, a place or presence that she at first knew only through its touch. For many who cannot see or hear (including my mum), the intermediary objects and rituals of home – a chair, a table, a cup, a cup of tea – are tactile entry points into the merged world of language, things and place. In different sensory contexts, neurologist Oliver Sacks refers to examples from his own research in which startling images of domestic space are spoken into the air by deaf-mute signers (Seeing Voices, 1989). This is a very extreme example of Illich's idea of a sense of place formed in language, and it requires a language form just is substantially different from the one that most of us take for granted,

Describing the impact of the object world on how we learn and use language, Sacks also points to the ability of language itself to adapt its own identity in response to us and our surroundings. This is part of the complexity of language that we learn to navigate, silently or in private codes that are barely language at all. In an example from the novelist Marcel Proust, Marcel and his grandmother try to improve their communicative bond with a simple system of knocks on the wall separating their rooms. She finds the unmistakable uniqueness of his three-knock refrain a near perfect signal between them. Proust comments on how conventional language could never know this level of intimacy and would have no interest in doing so (In Search of Lost Time, 1913-1927). A loud-hailed cry through the mountains might seem highly impersonal to us, but it can be as personal as a subtle knock from the room next door to its intended recipient.

At my parents home they have grown over many years a tiny back garden orchard, with lemon, orange, lime and fig trees, among a few others. Fruits reappear from season to season and during my recent visit I would message my mum in the morning by leaving an orange from the garden on the kitchen counter if I was at home, or a lemon if I was already out for the day,

In her recent and wonderful book *Living as a Bird*, (Polity 2022; 2019 in France) the Belgian philosopher Vinciane Despret shows how other creatures (birds, apes, octopus...) invent and reinvent social life as they co-evolve with their environments. In depressing contrast to this Despret describes how humans tend to get stuck with the misguided beliefs and institutions of a (barely) social world, most of which were set into place long before we are born into it. The buildings we work in are rarely chosen or designed by us. Can we reinvent the place that we work in through forms of language that activate it differently, sometimes more appropriately by providing what the building seems to be asking for, in sound for example, through calls, cries, telegraphic knocks and pulses, songs and the loud-hailing of messages to each other and to others?



† Keller holding a magnolia c.1920 Keller was introduced to the concept of language, and then taught it by her life-long companion Anne Sullivan

In a film clip from 1928 we see Helen Keller receiving Anne Sullivan's words in her finger tips. Sitting closely to Anne, Helen's hand forms a chord over the right side of her teachers face. Her thumb rests on the throat in contact with the larynx; With her first finger placed on Anne's mouth, Helen senses the sounds made by her lips, puh!; buh and the teeth, tuh; the second finger rests on the side of Anne's nose, sensing the nasal sounds, nuh, and ung!; A third finger on Anne's throat can also feel the vibrations of the speech sounds, she feels the guh, the hard g, and the k sound kuh!