

## Indianapolis Art Center / Installation Nation

*Conspicuous Absence - The Train in the City*

Joseph Heathcott

### Proposal

For Installation Nation, I propose a sound sculpture that will recreate the aural experience of the Monon Railroad. This installation takes advantage of the proximity of the Monon Trail to the IAC as it passes along the eastern boundary of the ARTSPARK.

The Monon comprises an important part of the sonic heritage of Indianapolis. A spur of an 800-mile system that connected the Ohio River with the Great Lakes, the Monon rail line extended through Indianapolis in 1881. From 1897 to 1987, a succession of companies operated freight and passenger service on this stretch, connecting the capital city to small towns and hamlets throughout the State. Passenger service ceased in 1959, and the last freight train ran in 1987. In 1999 the rail right-of-way took on new life as the Monon Trail.

For the past 27 years, the Monon has borne silent witness to the passage of an era--one characterized by the rapid expansion of national rail networks to serve the increasing pace of industrial production, merchandising, consumption, regional and transcontinental travel. The purpose of this installation is to create, however briefly, an envelope of sound that connects us to the trail's industrial heritage.

The exhibit will consist of a public address system with a weather-protected amplifier, optical disk player, and four strategically placed speakers. The optical disk will contain a sound composition formatted as a .mp3 file programmed to play on a loop. The composition will consist of 4-5 minutes of silence punctuated by 2-3 minute bursts of approaching and receding train sounds (wheels on tracks, coupler grind, whistle). Speakers will be installed near the berm running alongside Cornell Avenue between 67th and 68th Streets, or in the grove of trees that separates the parking lots from the White River and the Monon trail bridge.

### Artist

Joseph Heathcott is a writer, curator, photographer, and educator based in New York. He studies metropolitan forms and urban imaginaries within a global perspective. He is a faculty member at The New School, where he teaches courses in Parsons School of Design.



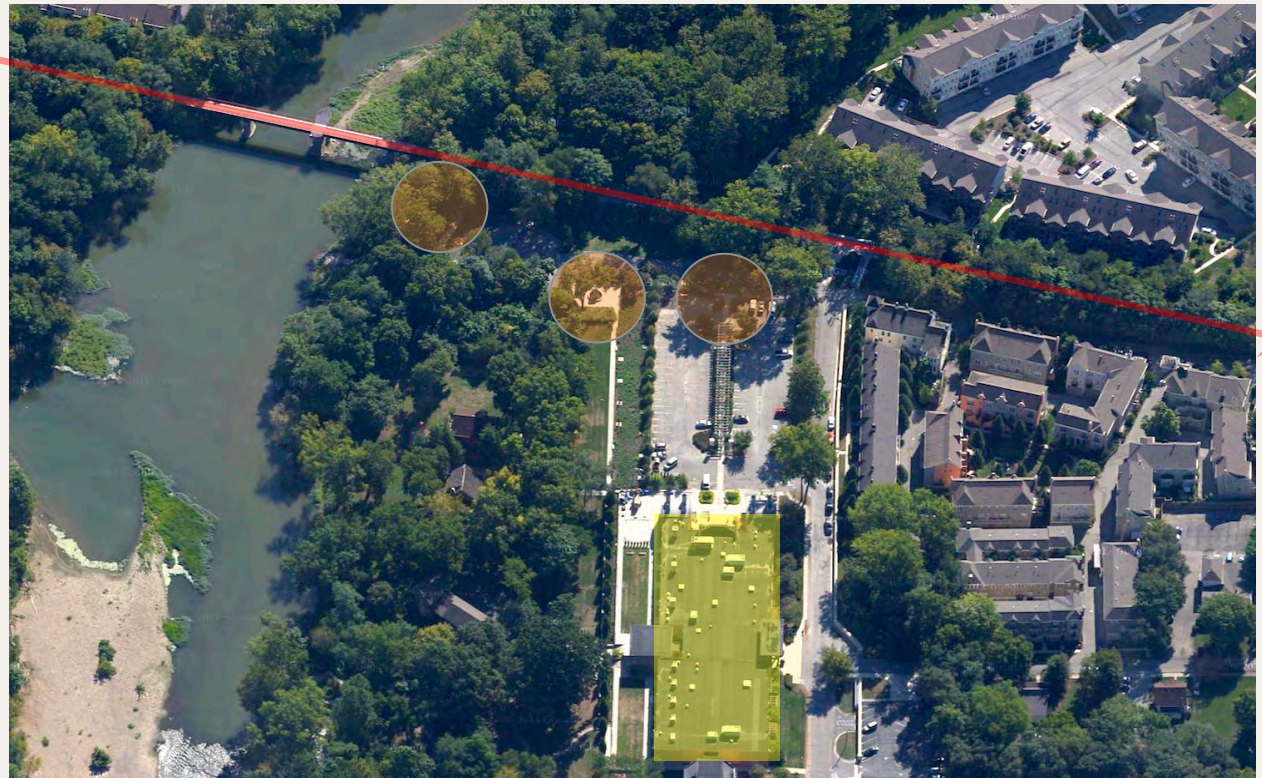
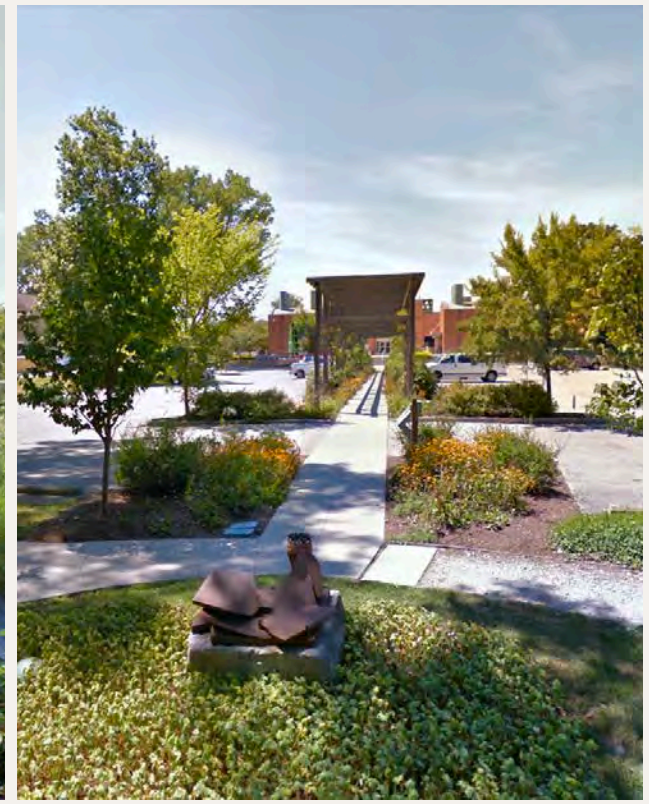


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Sound installation by  
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The images here indicate potential locations of speakers for the installation. Each location appears to have access to electricity and some form of natural screening (trees, shrubs). Speakers will be positioned to optimize the projection of sound from the eastern edge of the IAC, near the Monon Trail, toward the west, as shown in the aerial view bottom right. ←



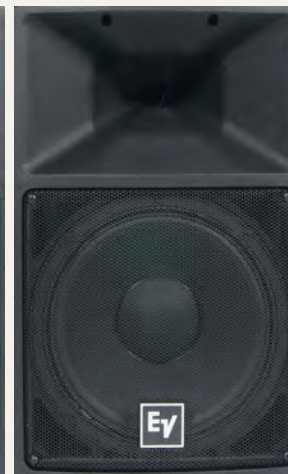


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Audio configuration





# Indianapolis Art Center, Installation Nation 2015

## *Conspicuous Absence*, Sound installation by Joseph Heathcott

■ speakers    ◀ sound cones    → sound vectors

