

HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto Audubon Metro Park

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GREATER
COLUMBUS
ARTS
COUNCIL



“homing”- an ability to return to a place after traveling a far distance/ to move or be aimed towards/ to focus attention on



HOMING is an audio installation and participatory performance score for Scioto Audubon Metro Park that considers the role of attention, sensation, and movement in orienting towards land, our non-human companions, and ourselves. Through a set of five audio guides featuring reflective and creative movement prompts for different areas of the park, participants are invited to bring attention to plants, wildlife, and the connections between our bodies and the local landscape. The guides can be experienced sequentially for a 90-minute moving journey through the park or individually for a shorter experience.

1. THE AUDUBON CENTER

<Welcome to HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. This is the first of five audio/movement guides for different areas of the park. If completed sequentially, the entire audio/movement journey through the park takes approximately 90 minutes, but you are welcome to experience each guide individually.

This first audio guide begins on the walking paths near the entrance to the Grange Insurance Audubon Center and will take approximately TEN minutes to complete. If you use a wheelchair or other mobility device, you will want to begin by proceeding through the Audubon Center and exiting through the rear of the building, which is West. Alternatively, or if the Center is closed, there is a paved path on the Southwest corner of the parking lot that leads to the outdoor pathways nearest the Audubon Center.

The following prompts are meant to be used as suggestions for movement, reflection, and imagination. As you are listening, please maintain an awareness of your surroundings and make choices that are appropriate for your safety and for your creative experience. Feel free to stop moving or pause the guide at any time.>

Begin near the entrance to Center and choose a pathway to follow. You may take any pre-made pathway you see or create your own in the grass as you begin your journey. As you move and explore the flower beds, trees, and many places to sit and rest near the Center, consider that the land where you currently are was not always a park. Once known as the Whittier peninsula, this land had become an industrial brownfield by the end of the 20th century. In the late 1990s, the city of Columbus began a project to revitalize this area, and the Audubon Society joined the city in a unique collaboration to plan this park, which opened in 2007. The Grange Insurance Audubon Center opened in 2009. Pause where you are and remember: “Where were you in 2009?”

Now, search for safe place to sit or lay down near the Audubon center. This might be a bench or a chair or a rock or the grass. After you have found a place to land, take note of your surroundings:

What can you see? Depending on your location, you might see the water tower, which is north of the Audubon center, or perhaps you see the Scioto river, which is south and west of the center. You might see the buildings of downtown or the Audubon center itself. You might see plants like oak trees or flowers like bee balm. You might see wildlife like squirrels or insects like butterflies. You might see other people, or you might be alone.

What can you hear? This park is a designated Important Bird Area because its features make it an ideal stopover place during birds’ northward migration in the spring. Can you hear any birds singing right now? This park is also natural oasis in

the middle of a bustling city. Can you hear the cars from the nearby highway?

What can you smell? There are many types of native plants and flowers growing around or near the center, such as milkweed, black eyed susan, and cone flowers. Can you smell any of them from where you are sitting?

Close your eyes, and notice the parts of your body, your skin, that is touching the air outside. What is the temperature? The humidity? Is there a breeze?

Now, notice the feel of your own breath as it passes in and out of your nose, throat, and lungs. Consider that, through the breath, the air outside of your body, eventually becomes the air on the inside.

From your seat, notice what solid surfaces your body is already touching. Allow those parts of you to become more rooted, as though your body could grow down, down, down and spread out into the earth itself. Like a tree.

Open your eyes. Can you notice the different size and shapes of these tree leaves from where you are?

When you are ready, get up and move towards a tree and touch one of its leaves.

What is the size and shape of this leaf? What is its texture?

Spend some time exploring some of the other pathways around the center through touch: leaves, tree trunks, flowers, rocks. Feel free to move as far away from your original landing place as you would like.

<The next audio/movement guide will begin at the river observation deck, directly south of center, and will travel west, then north, along the Scioto Greenway Trail. You can take the stairs down the hill to reach the deck, and if you use a wheelchair, you can access the observation deck by following the paved path that

crosses south of behind the center until it reaches the Scioto Greenway Trail. Then, make a left and the observation deck will be several yards ahead on your right.>

2. THE SCIOTO GREENWAY TRAIL

<Welcome to HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. This is the second of five audio/movement guides for different areas of the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. If completed sequentially, the entire audio/movement journey through the park takes approximately 90 minutes, but you are welcome to experience each guide individually.

This audio/movement guide will move along the Scioto Greenway Trail from south to north, beginning at the River Observation Deck directly across from the Grange Insurance Audubon Center. It takes approximately FIFTEEN minutes to complete. The River Observation Deck and Scioto-Greenway Trail is accessible to those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices by a paved path that crosses between the river and the Audubon-Center.

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Begin on the Observation Deck facing the River. Noticing how it flows from your right to your left.

Now turn away from the river to face the Audubon Center and feel the length of the Scioto River at your back. It's stretching out to your right, toward the train tracks, stretching out to your left toward the river's bend. You can reach in each direction, maybe out through your arms, out through your fingertips - to the train tracks, to the river's bend. There is a water tower is way out in front of you, hidden

from view, on the other side of the Audubon Center.

Make your way toward the pavement and pause when you get to the paved Greenway Trail. This is a human made path, suggested in its shape and length by the river. The path lengthens away from you in both directions. If you look down to the ground, you may notice that you are exactly where you are. On your own little piece of pavement, here, and not there.

Begin moving by following the path as it extends to your left, under the canopy of trees. Set your own pace. Notice the rhythm of your travel. Do you hear your own footsteps, or the rhythm of your heartbeat? What cadence is present here? Connect in with that rhythm. Get to know it as you continue moving forward down the path.

Pause. Feel the rhythm even while you are still.

Turn to face the direction you came from and notice all the ground you covered. The pathway in your past. Each rhythmic step along the way. Turn to face the way you were headed. The pathway in your future. From a grounded position, lean back slightly, into your past. Lean forward, slightly, into your future. Center yourself over your weight, over this little stretch of pavement, into your present. Take your present with you as you continue your walk.

Sense the trees around you. This trail is full of trees like oaks, paw paws, dogwoods, maples, and mulberries. The branches reaching out, up, and over. How big were they ten years ago? How big were you?

Continue your forward movement and your rhythm, moving into your future. Sense the edges of the pathway mirroring the edges of the river. As you walk, use your arms and hands to describe these edges, carving through space. You are mirroring the pathway with your arms the way the pathway mirrors the edges of

the river. Maybe you can try this with your legs and feet.

Notice the plants on either side of the path in the under canopy like clover, spice bush, trout lillies, columbine, and bluebells. How long have they been here? How long have you been here?

Pause. Feel the rhythm. Turn to face the direction you came from and notice all the ground you covered. Consider where you have been in relationship to where you are going.

Before the riverfront vision plan, this was a primarily industrial district. But before that, it was the Whitter peninsula, home to many German immigrants. But before that, before the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Scioto River was a transportation path for the Shawnee, Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, Seneca and Miami.

But before that, it was a Prehistoric woodland of flourishing wildlife, home to species that are long since extinct.

How far back does this path go? What does it need to stretch on into the future?

<The next audio/movement guide begins at the base of the Water Tower, which is north of the Wetlands, and the Audubon Center. To reach the Water Tower, follow the Scioto Greenway Trail to where it intersects with the bike route. Then turn right and head up the hill, where you will reach another paved path. Turn left, away from the Audubon Center, and follow this path until you reach the base of the water tower. Follow signs for the bike path and the climbing wall.>

3. THE WATERTOWER

<Welcome to HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. This is the third of five audio/movement guides for different areas of the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. If completed sequentially, the entire

audio/movement journey through the park takes approximately 90 minutes, but you are welcome to experience each guide individually.

This audio/movement guide takes place near and on the platforms of the Water Tower. It takes approximately EIGHT minutes to complete. The climb to the platforms of the Water Tower are NOT wheel-chair accessible.

The following prompts are meant to be used as suggestions for movement, reflection, and imagination. As you are listening, please maintain an awareness of your surroundings and make choices that are appropriate for your safety and for your creative experience. Feel free to stop moving or pause the guide at any time.>

Make your way to the base of the bright red water tower. Try circling slowly around the base, taking note of its perimeter. Do you cross into its shadow? Standing at its base, how tall are you in comparison with the height of its legs? How many of you would it take, stacked end to end, to reach its full height?

Next, find a seat on the Watertower's steps. Notice the feel of the metal underneath you. What is its temperature? Its texture? Notice the ground underneath you. How does its texture compare with the metal of the tower? With the texture of your clothing, or your skin? Check in with your own textural makeup. What materials are you made of? How big is a hand in comparison with the length of your whole body? How big is a fingernail? How big is a skin cell?

If it is available to you, make your way up the stairs to the first platform of the Watertower. Locate the Audubon center. How far is it from you? How many paces would it take for you to arrive at its door? , or how many breaths, or how many flaps of a bird's wing? How far is the Scioto Greenway? How far are the wetlands? How far is the field?

Imagine what was developed by people, and what has been here long before people. Note the highway, the power lines, and the climbing wall. Note the robins, the oaks, and the river.

Notice the distance between you and the ground. How is it shifting? Maybe you can hear the sound of the metal steps underneath your feet. Sense its reverberation. See if there is any reverberation inside of your body.

Make yourself as tall as you can, maybe by going all the way to the top of the stairs, reaching the 2nd and highest platform of the Water, maybe by lengthening up through your spine, maybe by reaching your arms or legs or chin into the air.

Look or or imagine out as far as you can see. How many of you would it take, stacked end to end, to reach the nearest building downtown? How far away are the nearest trees? What about the nearest birds and bugs? Imagine you were the full height of this water tower: what might you be able to see or hear or touch?

If you were to expand out from all of your extremities, like a spider web, maybe you could touch the buildings downtown, the river, the center, the wetlands, and the field all at once. Maybe you could be a connector between people and plants and things. Maybe if you could touch all of these things together, you would feel something connecting inside your body. Maybe you could go as far in, microscopically, as you could out, over miles.

Maybe there are distances inside you just as there are distances outside of you.

<The next audio/movement guide begins at the northern edge of the Wetlands. If you've climbed to the top of the Water Tower, descend the stairs and walk south until you find the boardwalk.>

4. THE WETLANDS

<Welcome to HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. This is the fourth of five audio/movement guides for different areas of the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. If completed sequentially, the entire audio/movement journey through the park takes approximately 90 minutes, but you are welcome to experience each guide individually.

This audio/movement guide will move through the Wetlands from north to south, away from the Water Tower and towards the Audubon Center. It takes approximately SEVEN minutes to complete. The paths through the Wetlands are accessible to those who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices.

The following prompts are meant to be used as suggestions for movement, reflection, and imagination. As you are listening, please maintain an awareness of your surroundings and make choices that are appropriate for your safety and for your creative experience. Feel free to stop moving or pause the guide at any time.>

Begin by walking slowly along the boardwalk, away from the Water Tower and towards the Scioto River and the Audubon Center. This boardwalk serves as an important artery through a very special living laboratory- a wetland.

Wetlands are, quite simply, areas of land that are covered or saturated with water. Wetlands are biologically diverse systems that provide habitats to important and endangered species, improve water quality, and offer erosion control. This wetland is home to birds such as mallard ducks, blue herons, and egrets, amphibians such as bullfrogs, and reptiles such as snapping turtles and red sliders. In this wetland, you'll also see large varieties of insects like dragonflies and yes, mosquitoes, which are an crucial food source for bats and swallows.

In a healthy wetland, there shouldn't be any fish, but you might see some that have been mistakenly put there by humans.

During migration season, this wetland is an important place of refuge for traveling birds, where they can rest and feel safe in the still water and grasses.

Take a moment to pause, be still, and think about where you feel safe. Do you feel safe here in the wetlands, like birds do? What cues from your body let you know that you are safe.

As you continue moving slowly along the boardwalk, draw your attention to what is solid and what is liquid in this particular landscape. You might imagine, in this place, that you are moving in between those two states.

In fact, your own body is roughly 60% water, so you, like a wetland, are always living through fluidity.

Find a place to stop, where you can sit or stand, and imagine the fluids moving through your own body— through your blood and lymphatic tissues, through your organs, through your own cells.

Hydration is important for many bodily functions, including the removal of waste, and the same is true of wetlands: they help clean water and remove pollutants. One might call them the kidneys of the larger ecosystem.

Take your hands and place them on your back, above your hips and below your middle ribs, where you will approximately find your own kidneys. Breathe into that touch. Return your arms to your side when you are ready.

In your mind's eye, imagine the flow of water in this ecosystem, that you are a part of. From the rain, to the wetlands, to the river, to a water treatment plant, maybe to a water tower, to your sink, to your water bottle, to your own body. You are a part of this cycle.

To embody this cycle, reach your arms up by your ears, fingertips to the sky, and then bring your arms down in front of your body by bending your elbows and pressing your hands, palms face down, towards the ground until your arms are once again by your side. Repeat this cycle several times, inhaling as the arms go up, and exhaling as the arms come down.

When you are ready, continue walking along the boardwalk through the wetlands.

<The next audio/movement walk takes place in the Recreation Fields, which are east of the wetlands. You can follow the Wetland boardwalk towards the paths leading to the Audubon Center, and continue following them east, through the prairie grasses and flowers, past the parking lot, and across the road to reach the Recreation Fields. Look for the shelter building with the red roof. There, you'll find a crosswalk where it's safe to cross the road.>

5. RECREATION FIELD

<Welcome to HOMING: an audio/movement journey for Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. This is the fifth of five audio/movement guides for different areas of the Scioto-Audubon Metro Park. If completed sequentially, the entire audio/movement journey through the park takes approximately 90 minutes, but you are welcome to experience each guide individually.

This audio/movement guide takes place within the large, grassy area known as the Recreation Field. It takes approximately FIFTEEN minutes to complete. The Recreation Field is accessible to those use wheelchairs or mobility devices by the road, but this guide does involve prompts which invite people to travel through the grass. Please be aware of vehicles when crossing the road to reach the Recreation Field.

The following prompts are meant to be used as suggestions for movement, reflection, and imagination. As you are listening, please maintain an awareness of your surroundings and make choices that are appropriate for your safety and for

your creative experience. Feel free to stop moving or pause the guide at any time.>

Find the large swings near the shelter buildings to the southeast of the field and take a seat., near the crosswalk.

Here, you are facing the tall buildings of downtown and away from the curving Scioto river behind you. Notice the expansive roundness of the open space in front of you. Breathe in this expansiveness.

This open field used to be the city's impound lot. Imagine what it would have looked, and sounded, and smelled like.

Notice what it looks, and sounds, and smells like now. This park used to be an industrial brownfield, and now it's this beautiful place, full of history, and also the potential of what it might be in the future.

Now, imagine what this place could look, and sound, and smell like 10 years from now, or 100, or 1000. Is it full of people? Plants? Animals? What colors or textures are there? What sounds and smells? What of the present, or the past, would you like to bring with you into this future version of this place?

With your body, begin to paint the picture of this place that you see in your mind's eye. You can do this in your imagination, or perhaps you would like to use your hands and arms, or other parts of your body, like paintbrushes to give this picture a physical form in space. You are welcome to stand up if it available to you, but feel free to keep your eyes closed as you explore your image with your body.

Slowly come to a pause, and open your eyes. Re-orient to the here and now.

Turn to your right, and begin to move around the edge of the field, tracing its perimeter, and using the curve of the sidewalk as a rough guide. As you move, take

that idea of your body as a paintbrush with you. Notice what marks the path of your body would make upon the landscape.

After some time, eventually begin to curve inward towards the center of the field away from the sidewalk, so that your body is painting a huge spiral pathway, taking smaller and smaller circles until you find yourself in the middle of the open space of the field. Tune in to the spiral pathway that your paintbrush body is taking through the open space of the field.

You can take your time to spiral to the center of the field, moving or walking steadily, or maybe you would like to run, gaining momentum, feeling your heart pounding in your chest, almost falling into the land. How does this change in speed alter the impact of your body on the land?

Once you land in the center of the field, experience your arrival by finding stillness and breathing. Your paintbrush body is making a mark at the smallest point of the spiral you took to get here.

Then, face north, towards the skyline.

Face west, towards the water tower and the wetlands.

Face south, towards the Audubon Center and the river.

Face east, towards the dog park and railroad tracks.

Then, look up. Notice how small your body is in relationship to the sky. Imagine all of the birds that might travel through the air during their spring and fall migrations.

Inhale, expanding your lungs, your arms, your legs, your energy outward, as far as you can go in all directions. Become as big as possible, almost as if you could float up and out, off the ground. Allow your reach to begin to spin your body, continuing in the direction of your spiral pathway, around and around, expanding

around your center with limbs reaching in all directions. Your paintbrush body is marking the 3D space around you.

Slowly come to a stop. Exhale and feel your body touch back down to earth.

To ground yourself, take a moment to touch the land with your fingertips, or whatever part of your body can reach the ground, making a final brushstroke on the land with your body. What message would you like to give to the land through your touch?

What message is the land giving back to you? Through your touch with the land, listen. Keep listening.

<This concludes the audio/movement guides for HOMING: an audio/movement journey. If you have not yet experienced the first four of five guides throughout the park, please proceed to the Audubon Center to begin.>