

Tess Oldfield: *hiccup*
Curated by Inés Arango-Guingue
June 13 - July 28th, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 14, 5 - 7 pm
Open Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am – 3pm; Saturdays, 11am - 4pm;
and by appointment
ACRE Projects
2921 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL

ACRE is pleased to announce *hiccup* at ACRE Projects, artist and composer Tess Oldfield's first solo show in Chicago, curated by Inés Arango-Guingue.

The central work in *hiccup*, *Pitch Pipe Choir*, is a group of anthropomorphic machines from an ever-shifting series of works that relies on mechanical and industrial parts and processes to simulate the artist's own femme vocal tract sounds by way of these cyborgian choir singers use air compressors as breath; electromagnetic valves perform the complex task of the larynx—the muscle group that enables voice to be modulated rhythmically; pitch pipes, motors, and encoders emulate the voice's resonance; and blown glass spheres embody the human mouth's role as the last resonating chamber for sound emitted in the lungs.

Oldfield's dutifulness in reproducing her voice outside of her body originates in her expertise in lyrical singing, a skill she silenced as grief haunted her. The singing apparatuses have filled this silence, and stand today as a robotic resurrection of her lost voice.

The voices the artist's *Pitch Pipe Choir* emits rely heavily on the act of transduction, the process through which a sound is sublimated into different media. In this case, sounds from Oldfield's human voice morph into binary code and transform into the sound of the pitch pipes and other components' cacophonic rhythmic noise. Oldfield has also submitted her body to a kind of transduction, her organic reverberation now morphed into a Frankenstein-like composition of resonant industrial parts.

In *hiccup*, *Pitch Pipe Choir* will perform one of the artist's original scores for four singers, inspired by medieval *Hocket* (the French word for hiccup), a variation of polyphonic chants where harmonies are produced in the quick alternation of two or more voices, creating a spasmodic and dynamic sonic effect.

We invite you to join us for the opening reception Tess Oldfield: *hiccup* on Saturday, June 14 from 5 - 7 pm or during gallery open hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am – 3pm; Saturdays, 11am - 4pm; and by appointment.

During open hours, performances will take place every 30 minutes from 9 am to 5 pm.

Tess Oldfield (b.1992) is a sonic/spatial transformer/synthesizer/composer. They are currently exploring computational composition by designing digital extensions for acoustic instruments. Oldfield's work examines the cultural contexts of singing and the interaction between industrial and biological systems, investigating how technology both augments and amplifies the body. Their work spans various mediums, such as sound, video, performance, and installation. Building digital extensions for found instruments extends their voicing abilities as a performer, transforming tools into elaborate transducers and digital/analog prosthetics.

Oldfield holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in Digital + Media and has exhibited their work throughout the US, including Yale University Sculpture Gallery, the New Bedford Art Museum, and CyberArtsBoston. They have participated in residencies at ACRE Projects and Bemis Center as the Sound Art and Experimental Music Resident. They are a Critic/Lecturer at the Rhode Island School of Design in Experimental Foundation Studies and Digital + Media/Computation, Technology & Culture. They live and work between Chicago, IL and Providence, RI.

Inés Arango-Guingue is a Colombian curator and writer. In recent years, her research has focused on art and philosophy that acknowledges the social power of the unknown, the opaque, and the illegible.

She is co-curator of *Learning Together: Art Education and Community* at the University of Illinois – Chicago's Gallery 400, a major exhibition centering the progressive art pedagogy of a diverse group of Chicago artist educators from the mid-1960s through the 2010s. In addition, she organized exhibitions at the Mildred's Lane Complex(ity) in Narrowsburg, New York; Museo del Banco de la Republica in Bogotá; Flora Ars + Natura in Bogotá; and Casona de Linea in Havana, Cuba. She was a 2023 Art Table fellow and a 2022 Abakanowicz fellow at SAIC's Institute for Curatorial Research and Practice. She is a contributing author to the upcoming book *Tuning Calder's Clouds*, to be published by The Calder Foundation and the Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center.



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Accessibility Information:

ACRE Projects is on the ground level with a 4-inch step to enter the building. The bathroom is wheelchair accessible. Masks are not required to enter the space but we do have masks available upon request. For additional information, please contact the gallery's accessibility coordinator Lauren Leving at exhibitions@acreresidency.org.