


9-1-2015

from Away With The Birds

Hanna Tuulikki

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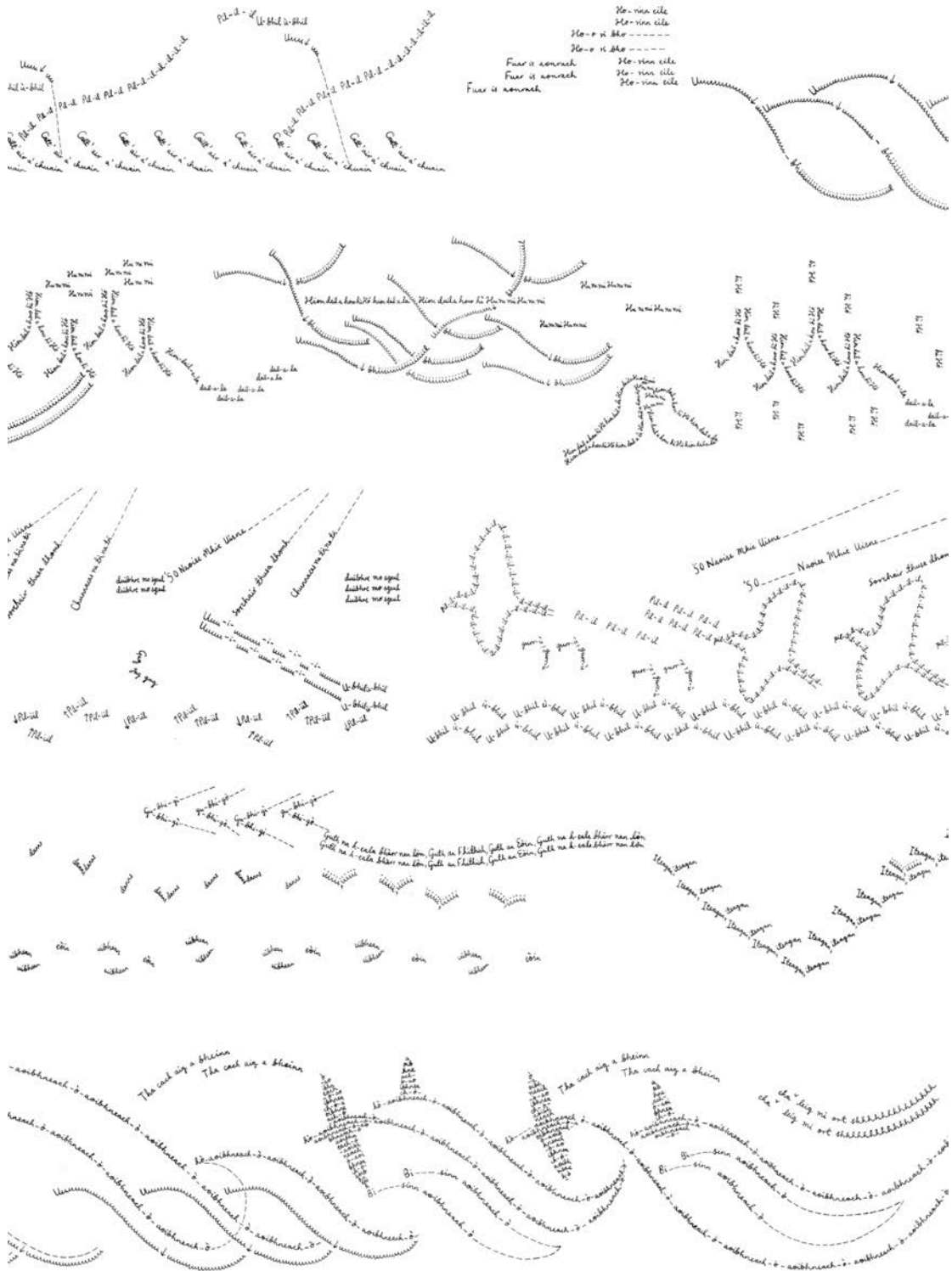
Recommended Citation / Citation recommandée

Tuulikki, Hanna. "from Away With The Birds." *The Goose*, vol. 14, no. 1, article 25, 2015,
<https://scholars.wlu.ca/thegoose/vol14/iss1/25>.

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Notes on the Text

Hanna Tuulikki's *Air falbh leis na h-eòin | Away with the Birds* is an innovative vocal composition that explores the mimesis of birds in Scottish Gaelic song.

Commissioned as one of the closing events of the Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, it was first performed in the dramatic setting of the Isle of Canna's historic harbour. The music responds to the islands topography, the co-existence of tradition and innovation, and the delicate equilibrium of Hebridean life. The music weaves together fragments of songs and poems that are imitative of birdsong, and over five movements, guides us through communities of waders, seabirds, wildfowl, and corvids, evoking sea, shoreline, cliffs, moor, and woodland habitats. The ensemble sing the sea and the winds, the motion of birds – wading on the shoreline, swooping before the cliffs, and beating skeins – and, as the music ebbs and flows, they call to mind the eco-tones where species meet. Listening to this musical portrait of the inter-relationship between bird and human, we recognise a lineage that stretches back to early hunter-gatherer cultures for whom bird-calls and animal cries had magico-religious symbolism – like the splay-toed fowlers who scaled the cliffs of St Kilda. As listeners we are tuned into a sonic continuum, reaching into the 'more-than-human' world.

In a new digital iteration of *Air falbh leis na h-eòin* for the SPACE arts online, Tuulikki has created an interactive version of her intricate hand-drawn visual score. Within its expansive sweep, sound, music, and movement are translated into gesture and precise notation. Words and vocables – sounds without meaning – represent the shapes of individual birds, flocks, skeins, waves, islands, and more abstracted forms, suggestive of motion or topography. <http://score.awaywiththebirds.co.uk>



photo credit: Alex Boyd

HANNA TUULIKKI's practice crosses over a range of visual and sound-based forms. She works primarily with the voice to build worlds out of sound, immersive ethereal spaces that attempt to unearth an essential relationship with the lore of places. Within performance she makes use of sculptural objects and stagings, often within an outdoor setting. Drawings, text and visual scores extend her work, illustrating subject-matter, creative process, and, sometimes, elements of narrative.

Recent works include *SING SIGN: a close duet* (2015) live performance and film installation commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival; *Air falbh leis na h-eòin | Away with the Birds* (2010-2015) live performance on the Isle of Canna, as part of Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, and digital iteration commissioned by THE SPACE ARTS; *heart-to-heart* (2014), bronze bells cast from a heart shaped stone; *A Rose in the Dawn | A Wake to the Dream* (2014) lithographs commissioned by GSA Exhibitions for Spheres of Influence II at the Reid Gallery; *spinning-in-stereo* (2014) a composition for two voices, presented as a visual score, and vinyl LP for GENERATION at The Travelling Gallery; *Guth an Eòin | Voice of the Bird* (2013) pen & ink visual score at Cape Farewell's Sea Change exhibition, Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh, (2013 – 2014) and *Between the Late and Early, RSA* (2013); *sea saw the circle* (2012) a composition for string quartet and musical saw commissioned by The Red Note Ensemble; *High-slack-low-slack-high* (2012) a site-specific composition and performance by the river Clyde as part of Glasgow International Festival.

Her work has been featured in *The Wire* magazine, BBC Radio 4's *The Echo Chamber*, a series about new poeties, and BBC Radio 3's *The Verb*. She studied at Glasgow School of Art's Environmental Art department and graduated in 2006. She recently moved to Edinburgh, where she lives with her partner and their books, returning often to Glasgow, to play with her band Two Wings.

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