



**KITCHENER - WATERLOO
ART GALLERY**

101 Queen Street North
Kitchener, ON
N2H 6P7
www.kwag.ca

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Media Contact

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Open Your Ears to Janet Cardiff's *Whispering Room*

Kitchener, Ontario, Canada -- The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG) is pleased to host an installation by Janet Cardiff as part of the 2009 [Open Ears Festival of Music and Sound](#). Recognized as one of Canada's most diverse and adventurous musical events, the Open Ears Festival is presented by the [Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony](#) in conjunction with NUMUS concerts, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery and other local organizations. The biennial Canadian and international festival celebrates the act of listening through innovative programs, from guided sound walks to multimedia performances. Free installations and audio artworks can be found in different venues throughout Waterloo Region. Each location showcases a different project that encourages participants to gather, watch, interact and listen.

Sound installations are an integral part of *Open Ears*. The 'inner Ear' festival-within-a-festival presents a variety of work in collaboration with the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo. Concerts are also presented indoors and out, in traditional concert halls and churches as well as alternative spaces including several buildings that had been abandoned for years and brought to life for the festival. Public workshops, symposia and sound walks as well as in-school educational events are also an important part of *Open Ears*.

In 2007, Montreal's Steve Heimbecker was artist-in-residence and created a Kitchener iteration of [Songs of Place](#), a series of works inspired by cities across Canada and Europe. This year, KW|AG's featured multimedia installation, *Whispering Room* by artist Janet Cardiff, explores narrative structure, and is composed of both audio and film elements.

Organized by KW|AG and on loan from the Art Gallery of Ontario, *Whispering Room* features sixteen audio speakers, each telling different parts of a narrative. A female voice describes a particular event from various viewpoints. The narrative sequence is determined according to the path that the listener takes from speaker to speaker. Gaps in the narrative have to be filled in and extrapolated from the information available. There is no guide to direct you through the space in a predetermined way. In this way, each person's experiences and interpretations of the stories and events vary and are personal.

The narrative segments gently pull the listener in a different chronological direction, shuffling them between the past and the future. Some of the audio speakers in *Whispering Room* stand on their own while others are in groups of two or three. If you position yourself among a cluster, it is like you are listening in the midst of someone else's conversation. If you listen to one speaker, it seems as though you are being personally summoned. A film projection of a girl tap-dancing in the forest is also triggered by the listener's movement in the Gallery space.

Whispering Room is on view from April 2 to May 3rd at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery's Eastman Gallery. To read more about *Whispering Room*, visit [KW|AG's web site](#), the [Open Ears Festival of Music and Sound](#) or [Janet Cardiff's web site](#). Residents in the Region may be familiar with

Gallery Hours:

Mon & Wed 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tues & Thurs 10 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Fri & Sat 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sun 1 - 5 p.m.



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Cardiff's *Forty Part Motet* which was part of the [Stratford's Summer Music Festival](#) in 2008.

About the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

Through thoughtful and engaging programs, the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KW|AG) connects people and ideas through art. The Gallery's exhibits and programs are built on the mission that art is the catalyst for shared experience, dialogue and imagination. The Gallery emphasizes contemporary art, often premiering works by Canadian and international artists. Exhibitions frequently draw upon selections from the 4 000 -work permanent collection to provide a forum for dialogue. KW|AG plays a vital educational role in the community, offering a full spectrum of artistic experience for adults, children and families alike. Established in 1956 and operating within Centre In The Square, KW|AG is the oldest and largest public gallery in Waterloo region: roots in the community, eyes on the world. For more information, contact mail@kwag.on.ca or visit www.kwag.ca.

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