

I started doing audio walks

Janet Cardiff – Clip 14

Janet: I started doing the walks in 1991 at the Banff Centre for the Arts. I was doing a residency there that allowed me to work with the technology that was there and they had a binaural head. Binaural means listening with two ears, but the recording technique for that is to have a dummy head with two microphones in its ears, so that records the reality around us in the same way our ears hear, so when you replay it and listen to it with headphones, you hear as if things are actually there and replaying . . . in the same way that you hear. During my time at Banff, I was doing some research and I went out walking with my little tape recorder and I had a headset listening to it, and I was walking in a graveyard and I started to say the names of the people in the graves and walking along describing what was in front of me. I don't know why . . . sometimes artists do a lot of research that never finds its way into galleries, it's a process of thinking and working. I pressed Rewind by mistake, and then I pressed Play to see where I was, and I heard my own voice describing what was in front of me. And I heard my voice breathing and walking, and I started walking in the same footsteps, and seeing whatever was in front of me described by this voice and to me it was one of those "A-ha" experiences that you go, "This is really strange, this is really

weird! How do I make this into an art piece?" So I did my very first audio walk there called *Forest Walk* that probably only about fifteen or twenty people saw or heard, but was a little walk experience that took you through the forest of the Banff Centre and had scary things happening, an elk attacking you and using the three-dimensional audio.