

## New App Encourages Sound Exploration in Albany

**ALBANY, NY...** As the popularity of augmented reality rises, two local artists are capitalizing on the trend with "[Listening Here](#)," an app encouraging users to take out their earbuds and focus on the soundscape surrounding them. A launch party will be held Friday, September 1 at 6:00 PM at [Albany Center Gallery](#) (488 Broadway), when visitors can try out the web-app, join artist-led listening tours, and take part in interviews on the sounds of Albany.

Created utilizing input from over 100 community members, "Listening Here" promotes attention to environmental sounds; utilizing written prompts tailored to the user's geo-location, people can experience the variety of unique and engaging sounds in the Capital City. As an example, Loveless and Magnus point to the difference in how crowds sound on a street corner compared to the space under The Egg at the Empire State Plaza. Listening prompts will continue to be added throughout the fall using input gathered through in-person interviews and an online survey ([listeninghere.org/survey.html](http://listeninghere.org/survey.html)).

The app has been in the works since 2016, but the seed was planted long before that as Loveless and Magnus met 10 years ago, in a class on [Deep Listening](#), the philosophy and practice of Sonic Awareness developed by renowned American composer and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Professor [Pauline Oliveros](#).

About the genesis of the project, Loveless says "We started our project with questions like what sounds matter to people in Albany? What does our city sound like? What happens when we take the time to listen?" The project incorporates input from over one hundred locals and hours of walking around Albany with a portable recorder. "Sound is around us all the time, and it affects us physiologically and psychologically, but we rarely take the time to listen. Our app encourages people to take off their headphones, step out of their cars, and really listen to their environment."

"We wanted to find a balance between using contemporary technology and having the app remain accessible," says Magnus. "Our app is a kind of Pokemon Go for the ears, but by focusing on written instructions and encouraging mindfulness, we get the benefits of augmented reality in an app that works on the oldest of web-capable phones."

"This project is part of our ongoing effort to bring art to the community," says Tony Iadicicco, executive director of the Albany Center Gallery, which has signed on as a partner for the project. "For me, one of the most exciting parts of 'Listening Here' is the way technology and art are being used to highlight the entire city as a public art space, and to encourage people to engage creatively with the sounds of their environment as a 24/7 live audio experience."



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[Loveless](#), a composer and sound artist whose work has been presented in festivals, galleries, museums and artist-run centers worldwide, holds MFAs from RPI and Bard College and completed her certification in Deep Listening with Oliveros in 2013. [Magnus](#), whose compositions and installations have been presented nationally and internationally, currently teaches Computer Science and Informatics at the University of Albany. She holds a Ph.D. in Music from the University of California, where she studied music technology with Miller Puckette and composition with Philippe Manoury and Rand Steiger.

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Press kit: <https://listeninghere.org/press.html>