Welcome,

I hope you enjoy listening to *Misophonic Contingency*. I created this piece during a month-long residency at Lobe in Fall 2021, to explore and challenge my own relationship to sound and misophonia, a condition in which certain repetitive sounds cause a negative response in the body. With misophonia, triggering sounds alert the part of the brain connected to emotions like anger, and to physiological responses like "fight or flight," or the sympathetic nervous system. Some sounds are more generally triggering for people who experience misophonia; eating & mouth sounds, or sniffling, but others are more personalized; a pressure cooker, a squeaking hinge, the whine of a faucet.

Misophonia is a very individualized condition; what one person might notice but not find bothersome, can be a visceral distraction that causes distress and discomfort in another.

As a mental exercise, I'd like you to think of a sound you find unpleasant. It can be a sound you know is unpleasant but do not have to hear on a daily basis, or it can be a sound you must navigate in your everyday life.
Now, imagine that sound on repeat.

Every few seconds, or every couple of minutes.

The sound is a constant reminder of your brain's ability to absorb its surroundings — this sound is not just close to you, it has entered your body. Imagine this sound is tapping against the back of your chair, or poking you in the back of the head. Would you be able to focus on a task while this was happening, or carry on a conversation? Misophonia acts like an abrupt but constant jolt to your nervous system, making it difficult to focus or remain in the proximity to the offending sound.

During my residency, I wanted to explore my own experience of misophonia, and through the 4D technology at Lobe, offer a sense of control over the sounds which cause distress. I also wanted to offer senses of comfort and enjoyment, to counteract the distress I often experience from triggering sounds.

Thank you for exploring misophonia with me.

- Whitney Brennan