



Video still, 'white clouds in blue sky', 2021. Kate Hennessy, Trudi Lynn Smith, and Steve DiPaola.

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Online via Zoom (Meeting-ID: 623 3944 3187 / Kenncode: 969099)

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Sensing the Cloud: On Mediality, Multimodality, and AI-generated Images

From galaxies to pixels; from flowing rivers to humming server farms; from family image archives to AI-generated compositions; from a mountain goat to a woven blanket to its representation as a 3D model stored in the cloud: the contemporary media environment is deeply relational, material, and political. While these relationships are largely opaque, encapsulated in black boxes, I highlight the work of artists, ethnographers, and research-creation scholars who are interpreting the ways in which emergent medialities are sensorial and entangled with human agencies, fugitive memory, relations of power, and capitalocene-era (Demos 2017) climate emergency.

I look to the adjacent turn in anthropology towards multimodality (Westmoreland 2022) and argue for a greater orientation towards the mediality of new ethnographic forms to counter the problem of unreflexive techno-fetishism, or our *bad habitus* (Takaragawa et. al. 2018). I explore the current massive proliferation of AI-generated images (Crawford and Paglen 2019), their socio-technical infrastructures, and ubiquity of cloud-based computing (Hu 2015) through recent collaboratively produced research-creation works that offer perspectives for understanding our sensory engagements with the cloud.