



Machines in Between

John Modern

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We are Machines in Between and we are a collective of over 100 humans from around the world—artists and philosophers, historians and DJ's, musicians and poets, biologists, and sound engineers, conservationists, trouble-makers and all manner of way out people who know the way out. Composed of 15 genre-bending audio episodes and the interactive experience of The Vinyl Church, we are pushing on the rhythmic edges of scholarly inquiry. By inventing a new genre of headphone->spirituality™ we are committed to your sonic pleasure and intellectual well-being.

The Machines in Between audio series is a wild ride through a fun-house of samples, science-fiction, and searing social critique. Part mixtape, surreal performance, and philosophical experiment, we offer original scores originating in obscure religious records. We mix turntablism with transcriptions of transcendence and transgression. Every sample is a new theory of the universe. We flip beats and metaphysics both. You will laugh. You will cry. You will gasp with joy and terror. And you will become yourself for the first time.

Each of the 15 episodes features original compositions, samples from obscure religious records, and original content from leading figures in the study of religion and related fields (Anthea Butler, Mark Taylor, Joan Scott, Craig Calhoun). The audio series combines scholarly insight, DJ orchestration, and science fictionality and is unlike any other public humanities media. Our accumulation of bent stories, surprising cultural analysis, historical reflection, and lush soundscapes is available on Apple podcasts, Spotify, online at our website and wherever you download your sound.

Machines in Between has set a new standard for what public scholarship might sound like. And with the immersive

art exhibit called the Vinyl Church we have modeled what scholarly engagement might look and feel like far afield from the classroom.

The Vinyl Church is located at Modern Art, was the public-facing home base for season 1 of Machines in Between. The Vinyl Church is an immersive installation that invites you to bear witness to what you love when you love your machine.

In the Vinyl Church you will be washed in the blood of the machines in between. All are welcome to enter the sanctuary, its walls covered in hundreds of vinyl records chosen for their surplus of feeling; chosen for their desperate demand for a world elsewhere. Records that speak of heaven and hell and standing awestruck, of ghosts and talking spirits and UFOs, of chakras, healing energies, and apocalyptic endings. You are invited to select the album that speaks to you and to place it on the turntable altar. When the needle sets into the groove you will hear, see, and experience the spirit of our technological surround.

Over the course of AY22-23 we have hosted dozens of events and gatherings at the Vinyl Church. These ranged from experimental lectures by leading scholars of religion, musical performances, film screenings, poetry slams, grief counseling sessions and therapeutic gatherings for developmentally disabled adults, photoshoots, programming for our community partners, "deep listening hours" for each episode of the audio series, and, of course, opening and closing ceremonies. These events have been exhilarating in the range and diversity of the participants. And they have been incredibly effective in connecting with the so-called public and making connections across demographics. For anyone who enters the Vinyl Church is made curious and appreciative. They ask questions about religion and technology. They converse with each other. They are given momentary pause to think and talk and listen and learn.