

# THE LABORATORY FOR WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Amelia Marzec

October 5-10, 2021

**Opening and Book Launch:** Saturday, Oct. 9th, 2-5pm

**Artist Talk:** Saturday, October 9th, 3pm

**Exhibition Hours:** October 5-10, noon-5pm

For additional information: [ameliamarzec.com](http://ameliamarzec.com)

I grew up in an area where a significant amount of our communication technology was invented and developed. Recently I've been returning to document the changing landscape now that the organizations there have been shut down, and to study the uneasy relationship to surveillance culture. This comes at a time when my family members have been aging, and stories of their involvement in the industry are creeping into the project—what does it mean to work on research that helped to blow up your ancestors? The project consists of a book and an installation.



The book, *What Happened Here*, exposes the locations of 28 sites that were occupied by both Bell Labs and the U.S Army in the early 20th century. Architectural evidence from the experimentation that occurred remains on the land today. These places laid the groundwork for our communication technology today, and remind us that our communication systems were originally intended for warfare.

The installation, *The Laboratory For What's Possible*, expands upon two of the sites. One is a nuclear missile site just south of NYC. The other is the location where radar was invented that was used to bomb Prague during WWII. The installation situates the early telecommunications industry next to Slavic migration history, intergenerational trauma, and queer family. It includes interactive software that will allow viewers to experience the decommissioned industrial sites; tools and items that were built for testing the landscape; and medicinal plants collected from the nuclear missile site and tested by the Urban Soils Institute, as nature has begun to take back the land.

This project is supported by the Research Foundation of CUNY, and artist residencies with Swale House and the Urban Soils Institute.

**Amelia Marzec** is a Brooklyn-based artist focused on rebuilding and engaging with local communications infrastructure to prepare for an uncertain future. Her work has been exhibited at SIGGRAPH, MIT, ISEA (Canada), University of the Arts Helsinki (Finland), ONCE Foundation Contemporary Art Biennial (Spain), NODE Forum for Digital Arts Biennial (Germany), and is part of the Rhizome ArtBase. She has been a resident at Eyebeam, Ox-Bow, and Harvestworks, a fellow at NYSCA/NYFA and A.I.R. Gallery, a Tow Fellow at Columbia University, a visiting artist at the Center for Integrated Media at Calarts, a grantee of the Research Foundation of CUNY, and a nominee for the World Technology Awards for Art. She holds an MFA in Design and Technology from Parsons School of Design, and a BFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts.

The exhibition will be in the **Project: Soils Room at Swale House**, and will happen in conjunction with the Urban Soils Institute's Soils Symposium: [urbansoils.org/2021-symposium](http://urbansoils.org/2021-symposium)

Swale House is located at Building 15 in Nolan Park, Governors Island, NY 10004.

Exhibition hours: Oct. 5-10, noon to 5pm. Additional hours TBA.

For directions please visit [www.govisland.com](http://www.govisland.com) [www.swalenyc.org](http://www.swalenyc.org)

All visitors are required to show proof of vaccination and must wear face coverings within any indoor spaces on Governors Island, and while boarding, riding and disembarking the ferry.

Image: Amelia Marzec, *Fishing Beach*. Digital photograph, 12" x 9," 2018.



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