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"I studied all animals and was always there."



Looking around Cat Hope's studio, wires, tubing, and glassware combine most of her space. Upon closer inspection, you will find a frog in a dedicated and an experiment set up to determine a specific and thought-provoking question of, "What does decay sound like?"

Snakes, lizards, insects or rodents, decay can take place across vastly different time scales and in forms that are difficult for human senses to comprehend. A concept developed at SynBioLab in collaboration with Rob May, Cat Hope captured the sound of a snake head's passing by recording it in a desiccator. In order for this to happen, acrylonitrile and specially glass pipes were inserted into the body of the rod so that an end audio could be channelled through. A computer program processed the sounds to an audio frequency range perceivable to humans. Through headphones, the smallest detail of the animal's last sounds, up until the final moment of decay, can be heard. So, what exactly does decay sound like? Her experiment reveals the process to be very quiet with sounds extremely low and soft, most of which are inaudible to the human ear.

Through a desiccator serving as an auditorium for the ultimate performance of a host, Cat Hope amplifies for us the sound of decay. Hope is an accomplished Australian musician, composer, songwriter, sound, and performance artist and has received numerous musical accolades. She is co-author of *Digital Arts - An Introduction to New Media* and serves as professor of music and heads the Deakin Green School of Music at Monash University.

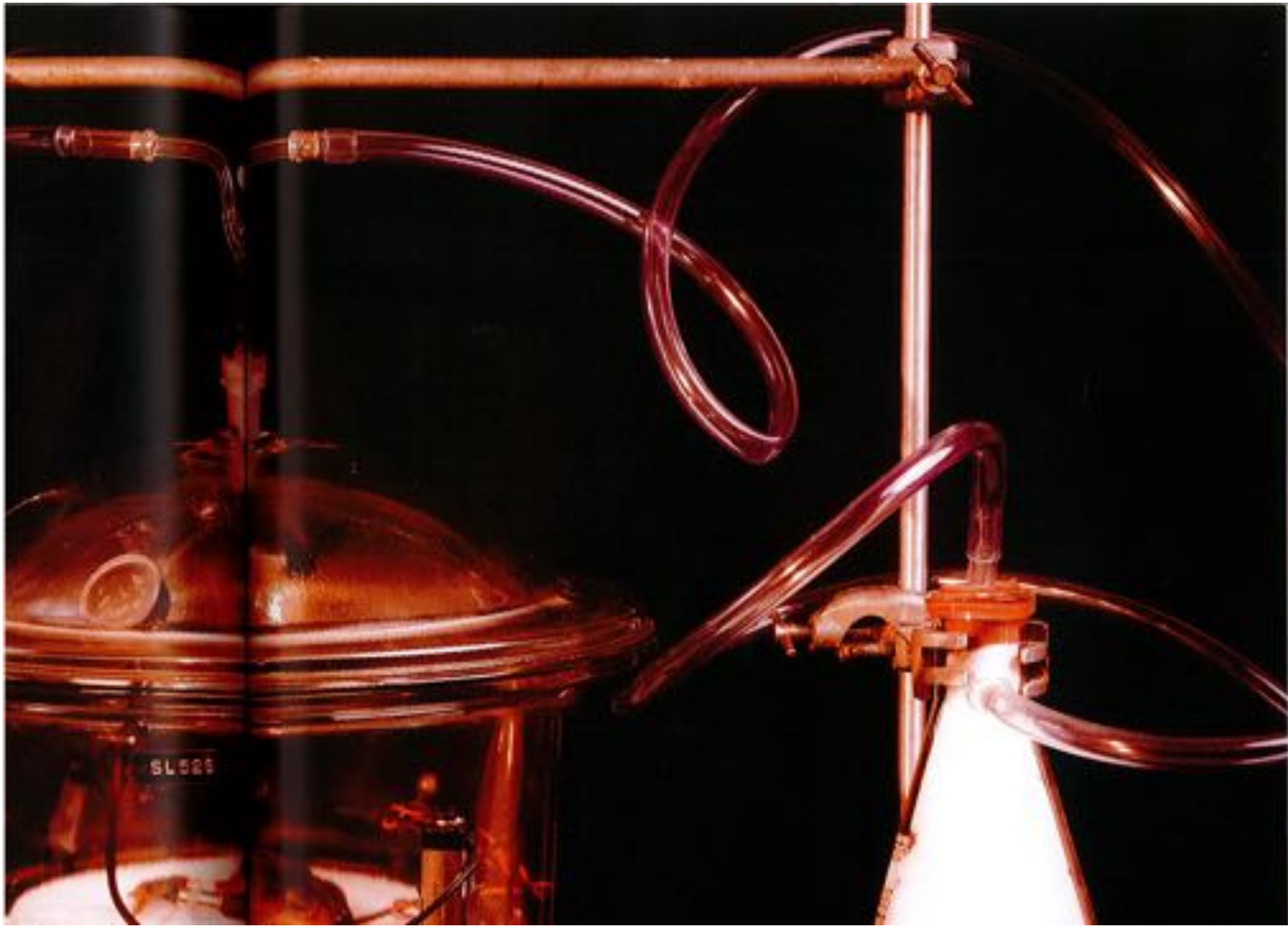
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