

*The Invisible Inside the Visible*

## *The Invisible Inside the Visible*

Three years ago a friend told me about a racetrack ghost in the landscape off the Cape John Road; three summers ago we attempted to find it. We did not. We tried again last summer, and were again, unsuccessful. This year, as part of the W(here) project curated by Mary MacDonald, I decided to find out whether there was any trace left of this mythical Seaview racetrack, that operated during the 1920s on the Westerly Road (now Cape John road).

What became evident during my research was that the past can exist in various forms of memory. There is the shared community memory, where the story of the racetrack's location is passed down orally through generations. In 2012, this memory belongs mostly to people with no direct experience of the racetrack. Only one person I met had actually witnessed a race; Jim Baillie saw the last race between Rockboy and the Ghost. When I solicited directions from locals to the racetrack, I was told whereabouts people thought it to be, but it often ended with the disclaimer that they had never seen it themselves. Yet even unseen, it remained a marker in the landscape. It was by the racetrack that you swam, or picked cranberries or strawberries, etc. As the title of this work suggests, *The Invisible Inside the Visible*, the racetrack, although invisible, actually informed the visible by providing directions—locating the present through markers from the past.

The land itself provides another shape of memory. The imprint of the track was still visible on google maps dated 2004. I realized, when I arrived in May, that it is a seasonal visibility—with fall or early spring being the ideal time to see it. We had an early spring this year, so there was already quite a bit of grass grown up. I was fortunate to go out with Ross MacKay from the community pasture to locate the oval. We found it by feel. Contrary to how you normally notice things in the landscape by searching upwards towards a horizon, the track is a rise of land that you stumble upon.

The racetrack's mark is slowly fading from the land, an inevitable process. I am curious about the friction between the tangible mark and the intangible story. Or, as I might propose, the intangible mark and the tangible story. In a sense the shape is the story, different in each telling. The fact that the story and the actual mark are divergent is part of the complexity of truth and memory.

In this project I wanted to act as translator between the seen and unseen. I collected stories, was handed down memories and directions from the community, and obtained images from google maps. The goal of this collecting was to create a temporary drawing of something that exists— and does not exist. Using hydrated lime, I traced the outline onto the landscape. The act of putting the powder down was, itself, an act of appearance and disappearance. The wind carried the powder, creating forms that mimicked clouds in the sky, before dispersing. Some lime fell into the grass, creating a drawing for the airplane to photograph. Since then it has rained. The lime has disappeared. The question of where the oval exists can be asked once again.

It is situated in the midst of a large green field. I have seen it.

Sheilah Wilson

Thank you to those who gave directions and shared stories:

Jim Baillie  
Janice Gill  
Mildred Heighton  
Donnie Langille  
Willis Langille  
Margaret MacLean  
Peter McDonald  
Susan Sellers  
Linda Thompson Reid  
Beulah Wright

And especially the community pasture supervisors: Ross MacKay and Raymond Mitchell

Rita Wilson for all of her help, Cydney Haynes for the use of her camera and Marcus Boroughs.

A huge thank you to Meh's for so graciously providing a venue for the project. It was important that the work be available to the community, and the publication and audio will be installed at Lee Tik's gas station and Quikmart during the W(here) festival.



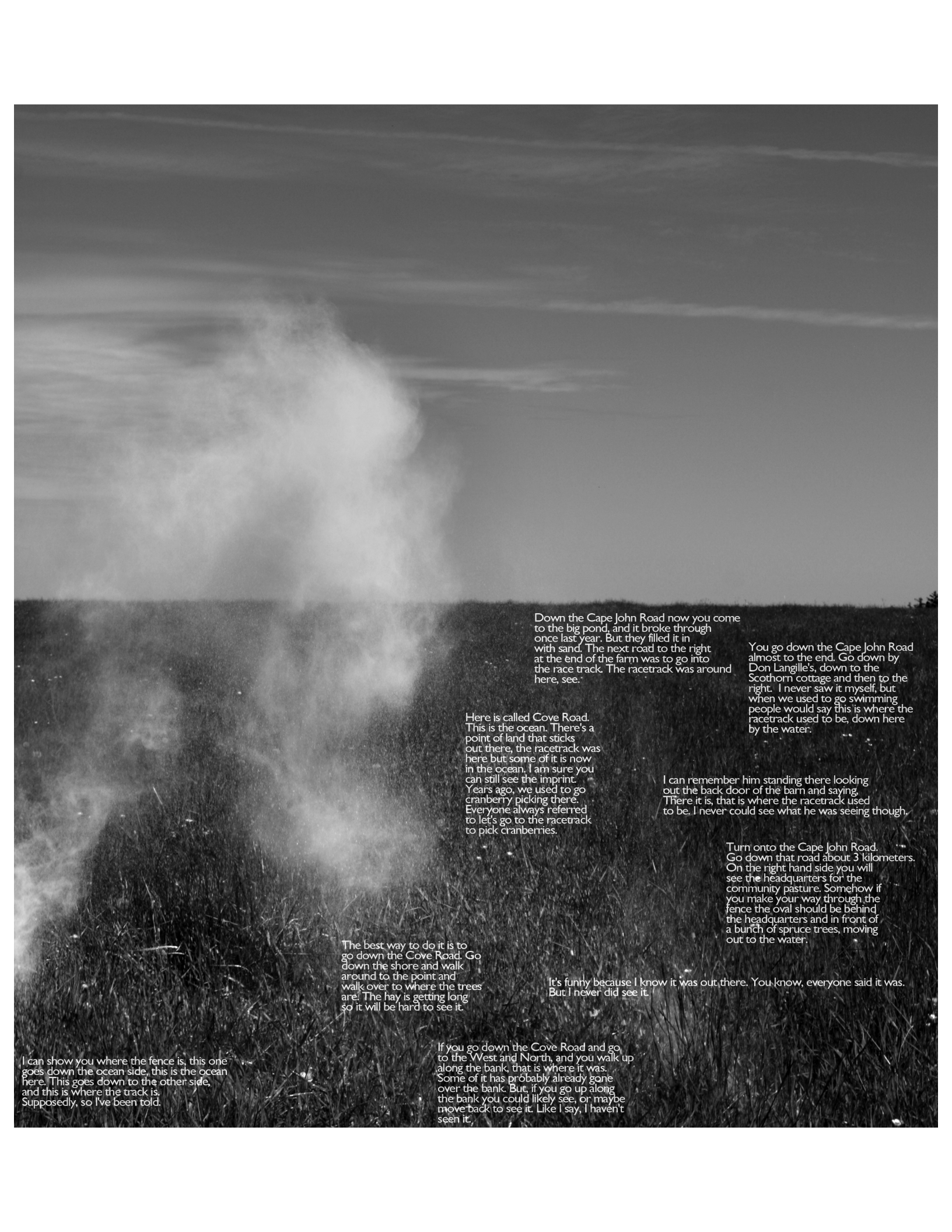
We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$154 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout the country.

Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien. L'an dernier, le Conseil a investi 154 millions de dollars pour mettre de l'art dans la vie des Canadiennes et des Canadiens de tout le pays.



Conseil des arts  
du Canada

Canada Council  
for the Arts



Down the Cape John Road now you come to the big pond, and it broke through once last year. But they filled it in with sand. The next road to the right at the end of the farm was to go into the race track. The racetrack was around here, see.

You go down the Cape John Road almost to the end. Go down by Don Langille's, down to the Scothorn cottage and then to the right. I never saw it myself, but when we used to go swimming people would say this is where the racetrack used to be, down here by the water.

Here is called Cove Road. This is the ocean. There's a point of land that sticks out there, the racetrack was here but some of it is now in the ocean. I am sure you can still see the imprint. Years ago, we used to go cranberry picking there. Everyone always referred to let's go to the racetrack to pick cranberries.

I can remember him standing there looking out the back door of the barn and saying, There it is, that is where the racetrack used to be. I never could see what he was seeing though.

Turn onto the Cape John Road. Go down that road about 3 kilometers. On the right hand side you will see the headquarters for the community pasture. Somehow if you make your way through the fence the oval should be behind the headquarters and in front of a bunch of spruce trees, moving out to the water.

The best way to do it is to go down the Cove Road. Go down the shore and walk around to the point and walk over to where the trees are. The hay is getting long so it will be hard to see it.

It's funny because I know it was out there. You know, everyone said it was. But I never did see it.

I can show you where the fence is, this one goes down the ocean side, this is the ocean here. This goes down to the other side, and this is where the track is. Supposedly, so I've been told.

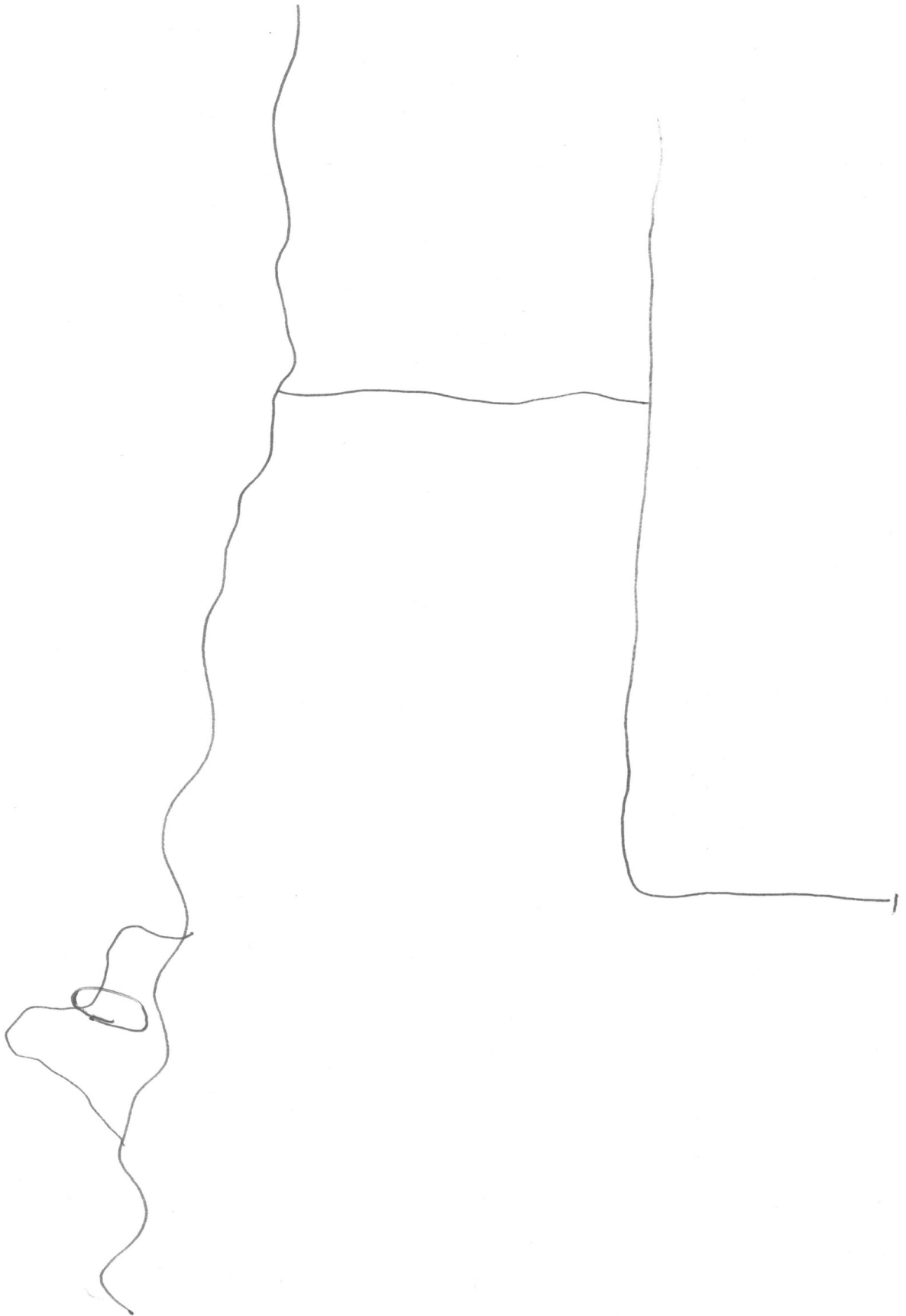
If you go down the Cove Road and go to the West and North, and you walk up along the bank, that is where it was. Some of it has probably already gone over the bank. But, if you go up along the bank you could likely see, or maybe move back to see it. Like I say, I haven't seen it.

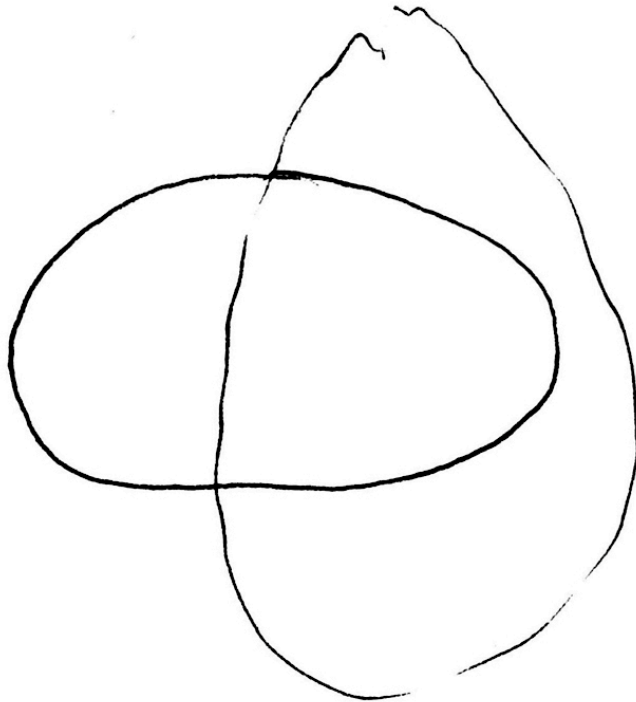












Draw a map to the oval, and explain how to get there while you are drawing.

Two kinds of telling. A line exists between.