



The focal point of Carol Watts's *Mimic Pond* (2024), is Mounts Pond, on Blackheath. When we visited it in June 2025, it had dried up (as it usually does in late Spring). The pond bed and vegetation were exposed. There was a lively breeze and the first rain for some weeks was in the air.

The afterword to *Mimic Pond* tells us that Whitefield's Mount, which stands beside the pond, was a gathering point for participants in the Peasant's Revolt (1381) and the Cornish Rebellion (1497), and then Chartists (1840s) and Suffragettes. Now it is a modest mound, dotted with gorse bushes and the usual city-park detritus. A few of the gorse bushes on the furthest side of the mound from the pond had been blackened by fire.

In my preparation, I focused on various passages in *Mimic Pond* in which the pond becomes a kind of cosmic ear:

Listen to the roaring of ponds

*

A diaphragm for reverberating margins

*

This ear, open to myopic resurgencies.

Hears the whole sky

*

Here there is a listening to earth

Its ringing

*

I wanted in some way to attend to that vertiginous hearing and listening. One of the prompts on our schedule for the day was the following, from another poet, Thomas A Clark:

things are vibrations
that steady
briefly
their locality
is variable
a continual tending
or tuning
to the place

For this soundwork, I attached contact mic pairs to two of the fire-damaged gorse bushes. The contact mics picked up brittle, percussive sounds made by the dried branches and spiky leaves as they were agitated by the wind. These sounds were all but inaudible as air-borne sound, but they came alive to the contact microphones.

Editing the sounds in the days that followed, I removed everything but the clicks and rasps that testify to moving air, and accentuated various aspects of the audio. No reordering was done: the sounds exactly reflect the impact of the wind on the gorse branches.

April 2025 was the sunniest on record in the UK, and that Spring was the driest in more than a century. The soundwork, which captures and translates vibration, is offered as an act of listening that attends to desiccation, a 'tuning/ to the place'.