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5 Micro-Ethnographies: Musical Locations in Second Life

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### **1. Indigo Ink Tattoos [Paradigm (128, 118, 34)]**

I found Indigo Ink Tattoos after searching for music/tattoo in the “Destinations” tab. Although I teleported there thinking that I would find an urban-esque space a la real-life L. A. Ink in Hollywood, I wound up in a rather bland-looking mall complex with rather bland-sounding B-list 1980s pop music playing. When I began walking around, I realized I was unable to see the pictures on the walls, signs over shops, and other details. I tried to click on the blurred images on the walls, but could not find any information about the spaces in the mall or what you could do there. Just as I was about to give up, I landed in front of “Indigo Ink Tattoos”. Maybe it just took longer for the images to resolve, but I was finally able to read the shop sign, as well as to view clearly the images on the wall inside. Although this destination was not labeled “adult” by the destination guide, it should have been indicated in the profile somehow, because the pictures not only featured the tattoos apparently available in the shop (although I didn't see any tattoo artists inside), but pictures of naked avatars as well. Given the PG-rated appearance of and pop music streaming within the space, I hadn't expected to discover such a racy shop. Lesson learned: let things resolve before wandering around ignorantly...

### **2. Frothy Music [Coyote (92, 181, 23)]**

Next, I searched (more selectively) for “live music” destinations and teleported to Frothy Music, located in a larger space called “Coyote - Environment for Creative Minds.” Frothy Music is a large Southern-California-style open beach house. Once inside, I could click on the objects on the coffee tables to read random musical facts and trivia, like “the only guy in ZZ Top without a beard is Frank Beard.” There several living-room type areas where guests can sit, read trivia, and preview, buy, and read about the music of Zac Claxton, which is the only music featured at this space. As I walked near each of these listening spaces in the Frothy House, a different tune by Claxton began to play. Only one other person was in the house at the same time, but he appeared to be

just standing by himself, so I left him alone. The other spaces outside of the house include a bar, dancefloor, and trivia game consoles.

### **3. tRiPoLoGy [Atlanta Beach (83, 166, 21)]**

Of the first three spaces I visited, the tRiPoLoGy space was one of the most organized. There was only one other person there, which I can only guess was attributed to the time of day I visited it (11am). My assumption is that, at the right times of night, this might be a rather busy space, given that there were options to rent the venue, host events there, and dance in a number of ways. Downtempo/ambient electronic music began to stream as I approached the front door of the club. In the entryway of the space, there are two boxes: the one on the right is a suggestion box, the one on the left is an application box, where people who are interested in DJing or hosting events can directly apply to do so. It looked like 6 people had applied to DJ since the last time someone had checked/emptied the box. I also got a free tee shirt while I was there and voted for the space as a “hot spot”, but I didnt get to have a virtual drink, since there was no bartender on duty.

### **4. Bubblegum Music Factory [Lion (126, 113, 21)]**

The Bubblegum Music Factory is a space which features AM/Diner rock from the 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s; although it was decorated with some pumpkins and other generic fall decorations, the space featured tie-dye rainbow decor and bubblegum machines in many of the doorways. In the main room of the BGMF, there was a small animated rainbow tie-dyed stick figure walking around and welcoming people, occasionally throwing in a random comment (“It’s really gross down here”, etc). On the wall on one side is posted the DJ lineup: tonight at 8pm Bret Braveheart is slated to stream some classic rock at the site. While I was there checking out the various bubblegum machines, I heard “Up Where We Belong” (Joe Cocker 1983) and “Two Tickets to Paradise” (Eddie Money 1983). In addition to the quirky and interesting things to do in the space, I could also see the information about each song, just as the current song was ending.

## **5. That Place For Music [Purity (31, 66, 22)]**

The last place I visited was, by far, the most interesting. That Place For Music is a large space near a coastline/beach. In the space, there were several subplaces - an empty beach home, a dance floor, a stage, a vineyard, random sculptures, and a place where you could sit on rocks and view two wolves that don't move and ants going in and out of their anthill. After exhausting the novelty of the anthill, I walked across the dance floor and spotted a guitar player onstage, so I walked over to talk to him. He was leaning on his amp, motionless, and although I attempted to interact with him, I could not click on him or initiate conversation with him (?). On the way to the house, there was a place I picked some grapes and to pick up a poem card, with an original poem by a Second Life user. I investigated the house and then headed back to the entrance to the dance and stage space. There were some interactive items in the entryway, ie. to join the mailing list, to get info, etc, but again, there was not much activity in this space.