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| Title | <i>Meeting and Listening</i> |
| Conversationalist | Randi Lindholm Hansen |
| Conversation number | I |
| Date | June 2021 |
| Place | Refshaleøen (postindustrial harbor area), next to the water, Copenhagen. |
| Time of recording | 07:35 + 17:49 + 23:34 minutes |
| Context | The conversation was initiated in relation to the interdisciplinary TRAVERS program and camp 3 at Copenhagen Contemporary. http://travers.world/ |
| Note for conversation | <p>We didn't know that listening would be the subject of the conversation. That just happened. We just wanted a short conversation, but that seemed a mistake due to the feeling about listening as a practice that would grow over time. So we agreed to do a follow-up conversation.</p> <p>This conversation can be considered the beginning for the Bureau for Listening. A first meeting.</p> |

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Randi Lindholm Hansen: [

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- **Lukas Quist Lund:** [] what kind of field or soil do this kind of interdisciplinary work or meeting grow in? []

I think interdisciplinarity can grow in all fields. Everywhere. I think, and speaking of what we just talked about, and what Rikke talked about the other day, I was very fascinated about the idea of the in-between, the gap between two things. The space between is often where new things grow and appear, so I think that is an important field or space. But I think everywhere. I don't necessarily think it have to be a gap between two things. I also think it can be the space next to one thing. That is also a gap in a way.

- []

You can always expand on/with everything. So, there is room for interdisciplinary work everywhere, all around us.

- [] how to attach ourselves to this space around us? The other day we talked about artistic bobbles []

I feel have a missed out on something, I had to leave that talk []

- []

[]

- Do you have any advice on how to attach ourselves to the space next to our 'own' spaces? So, we sort of interact with the space 'in-between'.

[] for me, it is very much in the meeting. First, it is about curiosity. And being curious about what lies outside yourself, your 'realm' and your own work. It is in the meeting with that 'other', the person, other artist, human. And there is meeting between what is already known, and what is known, which I think is of great importance [] I love to listen, and I love to observe [] I love to learn from other people and what they know, because it is always different from what I know, so their perspectives and outlook on life is different [] so even if they stand next to me, they see everything differently than I do. [] so just in the meeting []

- What does it mean to meet? [] sometimes I feel, well of course I know what a meeting is, but at the same time, mmmh maybe it also something more, something different. Maybe different for you, than it is for others. []

I think a meeting can be many different things. I agree, I think a meeting between two people is different from a meeting between a person and a place, or a person and a craft, or a person and an artwork. [] what is a meeting? [] the colliding of things, maybe. Not in a violent way, but as an overlap when two things or entities in the world overlap, and their worldview, for a moment, is shared, or maybe their experience is shared is a better way of putting it. [] for now, for instance, we have this meeting, and is sitting here [] so that is a meeting. []

- [] that something arose in me. The different roles in a meeting. Could you say something about the role of the listener, versus the role of the speaker. []

[] your way of, or how you are positioning yourself in the world, or your way of being around different people. []

] it is not interesting to be the listener, if the speaker doesn't care about you, or isn't aware of your position, and it is also not interesting to be the speaker if the listener is not paying attention, or the listener isn't engaging.

- []

Ideally it would be a conversation – a dynamic speaker/listener relationship is a conversation. []

[The conversation were disrupted]

[]

- Let us talk about listening – what potential is there in listening, when we try to do something interdisciplinary? []

I think listening is everything. If you don't listen, you don't learn. And I think interdisciplinarity is all about learning from each other. And from letting yourself get inspired by others' disciplines, other artists, other people's work and perspectives, ideas, and if you listen to that, all of that is lost. And for me, I think that is what interdisciplinarity is. It is listening and learning. It is not about [] listening is interdisciplinarity.

- [] maybe we can go deeper? [] what does it mean to listen... what is going on, in one's mind, body, when you listen?

I think for me, listening is the same as observing. It doesn't matter what senses you are using; it is about taken in [] it is meeting the world. [] it is how I exist in the world. How I socialize and get inspired. How I take in inputs and inspiration. []

] I don't know if I can explain the feeling, it's not a specific part of my body []
]. I think it is also a very abstract concept. Like inspiration. []
]

- [] do you think stones, or 'things' listen too? [] is listening only for humans, in this abstract way, or is it something 'all things' can 'do'?

I think it is something all things can do. I think it is a way of relating to the things next to you. []
] whether that is the wind touching a stone, or my hand touching the concrete. It is still a way of orientation [] a way of positioning yourself []
]

- [] a shared experience [] I'm now, through listening, with/or interested in observing.

I think, I wish that more people would listen more carefully. And don't speak as much. I think that would be a more interesting world to be in. [] I think we can learn so much from just stop talking, and listening more.

- [] is listening the potential itself, or is the potential relieved through listening, or is that even a meaningful way to set it up?

[] I don't think we would all be here, if we hadn't agreed to listening. Agreed to each other. []
] I am much more interested in learning what other people know, and for that I need to listen to what they are actually sharing with me.

- *Are you saying something, just by listening?* []

I don't know. []

- []

Your experience is unknown to me.

- What would you be trying to say by listening? []

[] except from offering a willingness and openness to experience someone welcoming you. [] the idea of identification with someone else's perspective or outlook on life [] how can you facilitate a space where someone else can experience something that is not their experience.

- [] that I am actually interested in you. That there is some kind of care or attention...

It is very loving to listen. It is saying that I think you have something important to share and I am interested in you. It is a way of giving in to someone's thoughts, ideas, experiences.

- Maybe, in a more radical way, you are making someone important by listening to them. [] what is taken for granted? Like the concrete, if you were listening to the concrete, would that be a way of making the concrete important, or what the concrete is saying is important?

[] how do you define importance and wouldn't everything be important if you just turned your focus, attention, towards that object or entity. If everyone turns and looks at the same flower, then the flower becomes important. It is all about how you direct other people's focus and attention. I think you can make everything important that way [] daily life []

- [] that is all about focus, but is also about listening?

[] my focus disappears if I don't listen to it. [] you are asking for their attention, and if they don't offer it to you, then you can't really do your job, your work.

- [] how do you think about listening in the future? []

I think we both need more listening, and more careful listening. More listening in a different way. [] instead of listening to everything that goes on at once, you slow down the pace a bit, and you take the time to listen carefully []

- What does that mean to listen 'fully', rather than half? []

[] with your entire body, and your attention. []

- Listening with your care and love, instead of without.

[] I think the act of listening is love itself [] but it is not because you need to love everything you listen to. You can challenge it. But just offering your attention to something, someone, is very powerful, I think. And a very loving act.

- [] and now, when you give me this attention, I have to respond to that in some way. I feel a warmth. And I want to listen to you too, now. Because, since you have an interest in me, that makes you interesting for me. []

Now we are back at the meeting. It is also about creating this space for trust. []

- []. It is also in some way scary.

To listen?

- Yeah, but also being listened to. Now, when I know, in what way you are actually placing attention on me, I back on you – then I am, maybe you see something that I am trying to hide [] maybe it takes some courage []

I love the idea that it takes courage to listen. That makes me feel very brave, because I often think that there is more value placed on speaking, than on listening, in society, and you can often feel that we fall into a kind of passiveness, but I think that listening is a very active act.

- [] there is more applause for those who speak up, instead of those who give their silence and listening.

But if no one is giving their attention and the silence, then there is no one noticing those who are speaking. The two are mutually exclusive [] it is a privileged to listen to someone speaking [] it might also be a good task to reflect on, when it will be a good time to listen. []

- Maybe something we need to help each other with [] applaud those who do actually listen. []

[]

- [] a continuation about listening. []
[] what about if you are unable to listen, not just physically, but also mentally?
Are you even human if you are unable to listen?

Yes. [] listening is also so much more than the act of hearing, so it also with your body and listening with a spatial awareness, and I just thought about yesterday, that listening also relates to empathy [] it's a way of orientation, orientation toward the world. A way to approach the world. I don't think it has anything to do with the actual act of hearing. And we all approach the world.

- And the empathy also relates to the premise of care. []

Listening?

- Or does anything have the potential to do it?

I think anything can listen. Everything in the universe exist in accordance to everything else [] and all of that relates to listening, to existence, to being. To be in this world. Whether you are human or not.

- And that everything has relations to other things, that you are not alone, then it is at least possible for you to listen, because there is something to listen for, with or after. [] in a very banal way; I don't 'know' about all the things that have an impact on me now. And of course, I can start listening to it all, but it is very hard to listen to the unknown, and that we can only see what we already know makes me wonder: can I also only listen to what I am aware of?

No, I think you also listen without being conscious listening all the time. []

[] listening is also a sensation in a way. Feeling the air on your skin, that is also a way of listening. I think. And even if you don't necessarily hear everything now, then you still listen to more than you think. []

[] and it could be that listening is more than about focusing attention or being curious or being generous with your focus in a way. But I think that is just a different way of listening.

- What is the difference between active and passive listening?

[] I am not sure that I have the exact answer for what the difference is, but I think, that passive listening could be listening without awareness, or not being conscious about what you hear or sense [] or some kind of meditative listening. Being surrounded by sounds, or more specifically talking without taking any words in, but just finding some comfort in a conversation that is going on next to

you which you are not participating in. [

] but I didn't want to leave this space. I just wanted to be surrounded by the words.

- [

] just placing my feet into the water []

But I think that is what you do. You are positioning yourself. You are positioning yourself in the world, which is relating to everything, and I think that is a way of listening. That you can just enjoy being surrounded by someone else's conversation and you position yourself in it, but you can do it passively and yet you are presented in a way.

- [] unknown touch to it. We talk about being passive, but that is not the same as you don't have an effect [

] it is not, how would this be different if a hundred people were listening, but how are the walls already affecting us, and the other way around, because there is already always something relating to each other that might be passively but do have an active effect or something.

[] there is a very active-passive-presence in a way. And for sure, this conversation we are having now is different – here there are walls, a floor – from the conversation we had Monday which was outside; there was the water listening, the grass was listening. []

- Now when we turn our attention towards that, become aware of it, it affects us. [] very physical limit [] before we were searching for the boundaries for listening.

[] spatial listening [

] making me able to listen to space or taking in space in a different way.

- [] and now I am wondering, what is the spatial listening of a book?

[] I don't know if there is a spatial listening of a book, or if there is a material listening, if you have a physical book []

- [] where I do my reading? Because that does have an effect.

[]

- Do you think some places are better for listening than others?

Mmmh.

- Or maybe it is unfair to ask for better or worse in relation to listening?

I don't think that there is any place where you can't listen. I think you can listen everywhere, and that it is a matter of; what kind of listening.

- []

What kind of experience are you looking for – and it is not like one kind is better and the other.

- []

I don't have a go-to place for listening or conversation. I think it is very much about the space you create between the listener and 'speaker'. []

[] it all requires different spaces, or benefits from different spaces. []

- [] that it is about the space you create in relation to the space you inhabit. And of course, these are entangled. [] the potential for listening.

[] the responsibility of the listener. To know that you have a responsibility. That listening is not passive in the sense that you can just lean back, and not make an effort, listening is very active in the way, everywhere you go, you have a responsibility to hold the room or to create a space [

] help to create a space between all of us, and I listen.

- [] how much can you, can we, do when creating spaces? [] imagining, creating a space, where everything, but listening, is taken away. [] put up rules for, that the only thing which can 'live' here, is listening. []

Some kind of enforced, artificial listening.

- Yeah, in some way – and what is then the potential of that? The dangers of that? [] Well, everything potentially has something to do with listening. I must consider pretty much everything in order to make such a room. []. Do you think people are afraid of listening because it takes so much? [] you lose a lot of control, also in a good way, I guess, but do you think people are afraid? []

Yeah, I think so. I think listening is also a way of putting down your façade, in a way, or to let down a guard. [] Listening can be quite vulnerable place because you give up your own being, in order to offer your attention elsewhere [].

- Or at least you have to give up certainty of your own being. []

You give up on your own individual being at least.

- And perhaps a kind of control.

Because, you can't control []

- And I guess in the society we have now [] listening becomes an opposition.

When you offer space to listen, where you listen, that gives room for someone else to talk. So, I think that is a very selfless act to listen.

- [] So now, the person invited to speak is also very much in place of taking responsibility – because now; please don't waste my offering; don't take it for granted, or throw away my love, care or attention. Which is also a kind of frightening perspective.

[] it is built on trust. It is... [] Oh, I completely lost my train of thoughts. It is a mutual contract in a way. That you offer a space, and the person agrees to treat that space with respect and with love and with care. And if one party breaks that contract, can it be very painful []

[] or don't respect you as a listener [] listening without generosity []

- [] a possibility of another talk about respect, generosity and listening. []

[]

- [] like, uuh, this is something I would like more of, like;
listening is good []

Listening is strength.

- [] I don't know if there is a limit to
listening.

I don't know. I haven't reached it yet.

- []

I think it is very powerful to have an awareness about your listening. []

- []

[]