

<b>Title</b>	Expanded Listening (working title)
<b>Conversationalist</b>	Nana Francisca Schottländer
<b>Conversation number</b>	IV
<b>Date</b>	2nd of May 2023
<b>Place</b>	Critical Mass / Kritisk Masse Studio, Copenhagen
<b>Time of recording</b>	01:39:03
<b>Context</b>	An alignment of interest had led us to similar conversations already. So why not this conversation as well? And the ones to follow.
<b>Note for conversation</b>	<p>We laid down on the floor blanket of the ‘empty’ studio for the conversation. Before that we sat in the sun and talked about a thousand things.</p> <p>We did not time the conversation, nor did we have a clock to navigate. It started, and at some point it had to end.</p>

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- **Lukas Quist Lund:** [

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**Nana Francisca Schottländer:** [

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- [

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When I thought about us coming here, I knew that the space would be almost empty, and I thought that it was a nice metaphor for this kind of receptive or empty state of listening, of making space within yourself for something to land.

- [

] taken by surprise about how much is still in here, because

then I just see all the new details, or find new elements to relate to, [

]

Did we talk about the concept of Ma?

- [ ]

So, this is a Japanese concept that's inspired me for many years, 20 years actually. I was introduced to it by an architect, and it literally means like empty space or space in between.

[

] this is where the kami, or the gods, enter or descend. And for me it was always this really, really strong image of creating the space for something to arrive or appear. And the empty space of course isn't empty, but it's made available for something that we don't quite know what is yet. It's made available for potential. [

] the space between two breaths, or the space between two rocks, or two gates. [

] rocks

positioned in a way so that the space in between them brings them alive in a certain way.

- [ ]

[ ]

- I'm curious, because in some way I feel that it is a space always already everywhere, but at the same time I'm also conscious about, well, it is not, it is only somewhere and not everywhere. It could maybe be everywhere, but then I'm not aware of it.

Yeah, I think that the key is awareness, [ ] with awareness, then it becomes active or vibrant in a way.

- So these gods, these potentials of entering or appearing, this potential becomes activated through awareness of it, or through the awareness of just having the possibility of...

I guess the way I perceive it is that they become activated by the invitation of creating a space which has intention.

- That is [ ]

An intentional space, which is not already filled by something, but which invites something. And in some ways, I guess, to bring it back to listening, I guess that's also how I think about listening, is creating that space or that invitation in me, in my senses, in the space where I receive the world. That makes what happens there vibrant, because it is intentional, it doesn't

just land as a jumble, it is given space, it is honored in a way. And that honoring or that invitation makes it come alive in different ways.

- It's also an open and perhaps caring kind of intention. [ ] but I do not want to inflict my feelings or my versions of the world onto the other. I am more intentionally open to the other and allow it to arrive and show itself. [ ] want the world in general and all the hiddenness as well in the world.

Yes, and I guess intention but not instrumentalisation.

- Yes, that's a good difference.

[

] I think there are always many levels of intention going on at the same time. But I think to set out an intention of curiosity or of willingness to be affected in ways unknown by that which arrives at my invitation is really a powerful and interesting and potentially magic way of being in relation with the world.

- [ ] what kind of intention do you then experience when listening? [ ] what kind of intention do you think we can offer through the practice of listening?

[ ] I guess I talk about listening in an expanded sense. So not only like listening for sounds or with the ears, but listening as a way of receiving resonances in an embodied way, not just through the ears but through all the senses. And I think to be able to do that, it is a surrender in a way to something you don't know, to that which arrives, to that which resonates. [

] So I guess in a way it's about readying my body or my system to receive resonances. [ ]

tightening the strings [  
]

- That's an interesting way of understanding surrendering. That when you surrender in this non-passive way, well maybe also passive, but at least in a way where the outcome, the effect is the readiness. [  
] What happens to you when you surrender in and to this expanded idea of listening?

I guess it literally feels like excitement. I feel excited, but I don't know about what, because it hasn't arrived yet. [  
]

- [  
]

] but it comes to you, because you're ready for it. The world sort of flows through you. I'm unsure, but this movement [  
]

] I feel it, I resonate with it, it vibrates, and before I had to run so fast in order to perhaps catch a glimpse of it.

To grasp something.

- Yeah, exactly. And now it's just flowing through me.

Yeah, so it's very much a receiving state, but it's not passive. It's receiving to be affected [  
]

] I come from a background in flamenco, which is a very collaborative art form, because the dancer and the guitar and the singer, I mean, in its traditional form, we improvise together. So the structure is set, we know which

rhythm we're working with, we know how that rhythm unfolds, like which tonalities, which different parts of a structure there are, but within that, we improvise and we have to listen intensely to each other. [

] this very early experience of collaborative listening [

] I work with space as listening to them as in being there over time, listening to how being there affects my system, and that being what this place calls for. And the same working with different landscapes or with different living entities, what does the relation call for? [

] And then something quite extraordinary can arise. And I can very clearly feel the difference between when I go out with a sort of instrumentalized listening or an idea of what I want to produce and what kind of relation I want to create. And it doesn't work. And then when I go out with this readiness and really stay true to what that calls for, then these amazing dialogues happen that tell me something deeply existential, and highly scientifically relevant that I would not have been able to find if I didn't engage in this physical sense-based listening relationship.

- [

] the whole notion of what it means to be ready,

[

] the readiness of an unknown entity, of an unexpectedness to allow something that goes beyond the wildest imaginations of what could be going on. [

]

Yeah, I guess you could also call it a receptiveness to be receptive, because that is active in some ways, but not so filled with action that you become blind or dumb to what reaches you.

- No, but personally, this receptiveness and this readiness that is beyond being ready for just something that I already know, also follows with a certain kind of, if not anxiety,

then at least need for courage in some way. That it's not something easy. And I'm also unsure of how much I've even experienced this to some degree, because it's very overwhelming. And I'm just wondering, in your experience, what kind of courage, both mentally and bodily, would you search for or help to engage with? [

]

I think that's quite spot on, because it does take courage. And I guess the scary bit about it is that you have to relinquish control in a way. And I think for us, maybe in our Western world, I don't know, because this is where I grew up, so I think relinquishing control triggers this deep fear of dying. So I think basically we have to come to terms with dying to be able to really, I don't know, enter into this very open, curious, receptive readiness to allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and shaped and moved by something. [

] in a way we do die to ourselves when we change, right? So to allow ourselves to be changed by something which is not ourselves, we have to allow that death/transformation of the known.

- [

] It's something that is not far away, it's

always very close to us. [

] the connection between

listening and death, [

] is there a relationship where

listening and death is influencing each other [

]

[

]

- [ ]

Your approach to death. Yeah, I mean, death itself, it's so difficult to understand what that is, right?

- [ ] how can you have this readiness and not also include being ready for death?

[ ] that readiness includes being ready for death, curious about it.

- [ ] I'm wondering how listening perhaps becomes something in between, something that allows our living to come to terms, perhaps not directly with death, but at least allowing us to not running away from it.

But I think it's also maybe there's something about this binary idea of life and death, right?

[ ] acknowledging the fact that death and life are a part of each moment. And each moment in a way, we die to what we were, who we were, from a cellular point of view, from an experiential point of view, from an existential point of view. And at the same time, each moment, we are reborn on those levels as well. [ ]

]



- Yeah, in many ways, listening is, if not a stop to binary thinking, then at least an expansion of it.

If we take the binaries, then listening potentially is that mass space in between where all can unfold and we can be ready to meet it and receive it and engage with it.

- And the binaries are very much what we are already able to ready ourselves for. So the listening helps us to go beyond.

Or to enter that space between the binaries.

- [ ]

Because it's like, maybe the binaries are two rocks positioned in a certain way, and in this expanded listening or ready presence or willingness to resonate, is that which activates the space in between.

- [ ]

]

[ ] these notions of does it take us beyond, or does it take us within, or into. And I guess, listening as a concept can take us beyond, but listening as an embodied practice always starts right here. [

] a

release involved in becoming available.

- [ ] I like how a conversation about listening and awareness, or whatever follows in that stream, also makes us very much aware of us in the space that we are lying down. I'm not sure how, but I'm curious about how you feel that the theme or the intention of this conversation also interplay with what

happens between us and how we interact with the space. Because I experience that there's a big interplay between what we say, how we say it, and the fact we're actually laying down in a very big, quiet room, but with a lot of small things and sounds coming from the outside, so it's like interacting with our little space.

I think lying down for me is definitely a very physical, concrete way of surrendering. It does something to my body to lie down. It does something to my spinal fluid, to my breath, to the whole weight of my body, and to my perception of space and of being in space when I lie down. [ ] experiment with positions for listening, or how to situate my body in uncommon ways or uncommon places to understand what the world is then from there. How it shifts my way of sensing or resonating with the world when I shift how I normally am in it.

- And there's something simple about laying down as a bodily position that invites listening. [ ]

[ ]

- What would a space designed for listening be for you? [ ]

No, it's any space, really, any space. I think the whole point is how I relate to that space. And I think that's what's so interesting, that the space for listening is inside me. [ ]

[ ] which is beyond what we can control, or beyond our intentional sound making. And I also find it so interesting in the context of a conversation like this, when do sounds become wrong? [ ]

] the total choir of this particular moment. And the magic of the timings that can appear when that awareness really becomes thick.

- I relax to both this conversation, this space, and the sounds entering this moment.

[

] So what should I be listening for? What is my intention? I don't know, I cannot know. I don't want to know. [

]

Yeah, and then what's so interesting is the dialogue that can then arise. Because if we say that this drilling machine and the sound of the planks is part of this conversation, that it's a voice in the conversation, it's adding something, it has agency in this conversation.

Then where does that take us? [

]

- [

] Like a spirit or something else, in the lack of better words.

That's a good question. I mean, intuitively I would say that listening gives agency or acknowledges agency in and around us. But by doing that, something is altered. [

]

- [ ] It both allows other things to come into the present, but it also comes into the present by itself by doing so.

But isn't that basically existence?

- [ ] when do I allow things to be and thereby become myself? And when do I hinder these other things to be and thereby become less myself? [ ]

[

] And not feel like now I have to stick myself in this particular mode. And that's the only true way of being here. It's like this beautiful interweaving, kaleidoscopic shifting going on all the time. But to maybe expand our abilities to move in and out of these states.

- Which again is then something that helps us deal with the binary that we often tend to be stuck in. [ ] That the listening helps us resist certain things because it allows certain changes, certain visitations or swifts. [

]

[

]

- [ ]

[ ]

- But it's just the whole binary again between surrendering and resistance. But if they sort of merge, I have no idea.

[

] this mode has always been my refuge.

And something that is extremely important for me in order to operate in the world. Like this listening, receptive, malleable, shapeable mode is where I come closest to feeling that I am alive and present in the world and in my own life and in my own body. But at the same time this is not what the world calls for. [

] to deliver and produce and consume in certain ways. And to be in relationships in certain ways. And to embody myself and my gender and express myself in certain ways that were understandable. [

] And that means that bridges are created, roads, like in a brain new neural pathways manifest themselves to shift it from binaries or poles or static conditions to something that can interweave and mingle. And be shared. And I don't know where this thread started. But for me it is quite extraordinary to lie here and talk about these things because it has been something extremely private. And growing up when I tried sharing these thoughts with others they would look at me like I came from a different planet or when I was a young adult people would think that I was on acid or something when I started talking like this. And I felt very secluded in this need to visit this way of being in the world on a regular basis. [

]

- [ ] And at least for me listening also holds something private that cannot be shared. Because what you experience and what happens through listening is something more than can actually escape the private-ness of it. [

] It is always still already something private. And these two spaces they can easily work together but they also need to have the courage of respecting each other. [

]

[ ] I had the realization that I am the only one experiencing my reality. And it sounds super banal. [

] And the existential loneliness of realizing that I am the only one experiencing my reality really struck me hard. [

]

- [ ]

No, it's more like you're called to. I felt called to try to share, [

] It points back to something which may only be understandable by me, but it also points into something which can create a resonance in others. And thereby link these very unique individual realities by resonance. I guess I really believe in resonance and in somehow finding ways to resonate my experience of the world to others.

- [

] within the category of the unknown unknown. That under no circumstances will I be able to know these things. [

]

Or that it does flow through you in ways that you will never be able to know.

- [

] that I am not the one to verify that there's something that I can name the unknown unknown, and I can go through life and be happy with a search that will not end. And resonate with something that I will always be unsure of, always tuning more and more in on, but never actually being attuned with. [

] Because then I feel free to just listen to you. Because I don't need to

understand, I don't need to use it for anything. I don't need to take it into my reality.

[

]

[

] Because resonating with and understanding it are two quite different things, at least in my experience. And resonating opens a space of, I guess, the not knowing, or the curiosity, or the potentiality. And in a way, understanding closes it down into something that I already know, something I can relate to, something I can associate with in my own life. [

] I don't like giving answers, I like posing questions. Questions that I'm passionately curious about, and the journeys those questions take me on. And I guess, in a way, posing a question requires that you listen to the answer, even if the answer is not finite, even if the answer is another question, or an invitation.

- And I think listening is very much that, being ready for the questions, [

] it's the intention for the questions.

[ ] We don't know what they will look like, feel like, taste like, sound like. So, the willingness to receive it. Is there, just right now, a question in mind?

You're a question? [

]

- Do you, intuitively, just have a question in mind right now that you will share with me?

[

]



- [

] I've been wondering about what questions will be absolute unanswerable questions, but that we still can ask? [

] with listening, I'm posing questions that I perhaps don't put into words, but I'm wondering upon something by listening. [

] this close relationship between having a question or having a wonder, and then surrender to the listening as the consequence of having that. [

] being in a mode of listening is very much also being in a mode of being with questions. And especially the more radical, unsure questions, [

[

] And I think I find that I try to ask questions on a very, very small scale, but then the answers blow me into a universal scale. [

] and then there is an electrical cord, but not connected to anything in the same direction. There is another electrical cord that is connected, running in that direction, and then there are lines between the boards of the ceiling that run parallel with the lamps, and another line that runs parallel with that cord. [

] What does that tell me about input and output or potential of energy? I like it when concrete things or situations or details pose questions that I can then wonder about, and I can reach some kind of feeling of an

answer, but it's never finite. It's just an inspiration in a way. So, I guess, I don't know, I guess I'm curious. How do you go about asking questions? Do they arise? [

] in a way a conversation with the world, like how is this made up?  
[

] what finite or unanswerable questions are you drawn to and how did they arise?

- [

] the innocent game of  
just putting a question mark behind it, [

]

[ ] I think that's a huge relief to acknowledge the vastness of that which we don't know.

- And there's a note that has stuck with me for many years now by the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, [ ] But he poses the question, what is a philosophical question? What makes the question philosophical compared to all the other questions that we have? And what he says is that a philosophical question is the one that loses orientation.

That's nice.

- [ ] sometimes I just have a question that is very physical and mentally and perhaps also logically disorients me. [ ]

[ ] And I try to create something that will disorient others too, along the same curiosity. And I guess with each disorientation, there is also always a reorientation that then sort of includes these new landscapes of recognition or awareness or realization into the landscape of the known and sort of expands the realm of what we navigate. And I'm always drawn to go to the limit of that and then look beyond, into what I don't know, yet, and into that which will once again disorient me. [ ]

[ ] It's been something that's been a struggle for me in the past, because I felt like I owed it to my close relations to stay the same. Otherwise, it would somehow be a

breach of contract. But at the same time, I'm not capable as a person to not pursue these unknown territories and get disoriented and radically changed by it. So I guess that's an interesting question for me to ask you. You say there's a big part of you that you don't share.

[

]

- [

] And I would like it to

be okay not to share things. [

] And it's interesting in

relation to this, because I think in general I have a feeling that people do not listen to me. But is that because I do not share? Or is it because that they are actually not listening to me? [

]

That our own individual realities are actually vast realities.

Yeah, they are like universes colliding and sometimes we manage to slip little notes. I guess what I am also thinking, but I mean you are young and so this is maybe a question for your future self. Is when this practice, this curiosity, this need or urge to keep challenging the

boundaries of how we are and what we perceive and how we act with it and what reality is and what we are in it. [

] I

found that I was not capable of sharing the new me with a relationship that expected me to be in the world in a certain way or to be a certain person. And I think for me personally this has been a big question in this availability to be transformed that we talked about. This readiness to resonate and engage and be changed by that which meets us. [

] This very receptive, but also solitary, diving into a deep dialogue with existence and with that which is there. And then how to go about meeting the world. And sometimes I find that the transformation can happen so fast that it becomes difficult to bring the relationships up to date with that change.

- I think I recognize that question even if it is perhaps for my future self. And also for me it speaks a lot into why listening matters. Why I feel it is a good thing to promote and engage and expand listening and integrate it more. [

] there is also a beauty in not keeping all the worlds. But at least for me that listening allows this potential of different worlds to come to terms, whatever that means. And I quite often feel a dissonance between all the many things that are going on. [

] And maybe I shouldn't understand it, it can easily be a question for me. [

] In this perhaps soft, boundless way where I am in no hurry. [

] listening as a resistance, which is  
back to this soft, boundless way of offering resistance through acceptance and  
availability.

And maybe also resisting the impulse to fix or explain or categorize or make acceptable.

- [ ] That listening can also be a way  
of accepting things that don't fit in, that doesn't make sense to us. [

] I am not sure how to  
frame it but I think listening for me is a way of processing these things that hurts as  
well and escapes my ability to grasp. But nonetheless are here and matter. It is a  
process.

And I guess it also requires patience to abstain from going from listening to concluding or  
defining or labeling and categorizing and sort of just staying with it.

- [ ] And I  
think within listening, because it takes time, because it takes patience, because it is  
not something that I have fully control over, I think I am searching for gestures or  
words or spaces or practices that are in between, saying that I am on my way, I am  
attempting, I am trying.

Yeah, I think that is quite true. I think that it is a gesture of willingness, if not of capability yet. And also the humility again of knowing that we are flaky and flawed and our attention runs in all kinds of directions and we can attempt to arrive at a presence and a being with and of listening. But that is not a finite destination, that is an attempt that we have to make every moment and sometimes we arrive, but sometimes we don't. [

] we are not always capable of being present or fully receptive or ready in the way we want to be, but we can practice and we can arrive at it again and again and again.

- I think a positive confirmation of that, at least the way I read it, is just this conversation. That there have been certain gentle gestures holding the space. Everything from our hands keep making these small bubbles in the air that we want to caress or us just holding onto our own body, allowing for the other one to make shapes in the air. And caressing our own bodies. I don't know, but also perhaps these gentle gestures also quite often go unnamed. They have effect, but they don't require a name. [

] it happens even before the conversation starts. [

] And maybe in relation to that, we did not agree on a certain time frame for this conversation. [

]

[ ]

- [

]

No, just like genuine appreciation for being able to share these thoughts and words and resonances and presences. I really appreciate that. It feels very... It feels like it is a very

familiar space, but it is actually not very familiar for me to share it. But it is familiar. It feels familiar. It is just that I don't often do it. [ ]

- [ ]

[ ] To have these two, the familiar and unfamiliar, to exchange with each other and not to be a stranger to each other. [ ]

[ ] as an example of a more sensitive knowledge production, a different way of learning and gathering knowledge. [ ]

[ ] without knowing exactly which question to pose. And then just listening for the questions that listening wants you to pose about itself.

[ ]

- [ ]

[ ] Because quite often it takes time to answer that, but while still being in the conversation, do you then feel that that knowledge has arisen, that the question about listening that could not have arisen in other ways, has presented itself in some way?

Yes, I do feel like a space opened up where questions were explored. And where this allowance of sensitivity and vulnerability also impacted the way these questions were explored or not answered. [ ]

- [ ]



] this beautiful little extra conversation  
within a conversation, like, oh, that was so enriching. [  
]

[ ]

- [ ] And hope it did record.