ΦANTOM power

Developing a collective listening consciousness
through artistic and pedagogical strategies.

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and pedagogical strategies.

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TO MY GRANDPARENTS

phantom

"something apparent to sense but with no substantial existence : apparition"
(Merriam-Webster, 2018).

Word origin: "from Old French fantasme, from Vulgar Latin fantauma, from Latin phantasma, from Ancient Greek φάντασμα (phantasma) "image, phantom, apparition; mere image, unreality," from φαντάζειν (phantazein) "to make visible, display," from stem of φαίνειν (phainein) "to bring to light, make appear; come to light, be seen, appear; explain, expound, inform against; appear to be so" (Etymology Online Dictionary, 2018)

power

"ability to act or produce an effect"
(Merriam-Webster, 2018)

Word origin: "from Anglo-French pouair, Old French povoir, noun use of the infinitive, "to be able," earlier podir (9c.), from Vulgar Latin *potere, from Latin potis "powerful" (from PIE root *poti- "powerful; lord")." (Etymology Online Dictionary, 2018)

Phantom power is a term used for the power supply of a microphone. It is called phantom, because it uses the same cable as the audio signal to be transmitted, thus making the power supply invisible.

ΦΑΝΤΟΜ power is the invisible power of the collective, that is generated when we question how we listen and are listened to.

CONTENTS

PLUGGING IN THE MICROPHONE

As a kid I loved recording my voice with our old stereo. I would grab the microphone to share my news, recite poems, sing or tell a story. Sometimes I would interview my sister, but it was hard for anyone else to get some 'air-time' on my show. Of course, these cassettes never circulated outside my wider family, but I remember how much I enjoyed playing them over and over again and listening to them together with my parents and sister. If you consider that a 4-year old's public is mainly their family, then this was my own 'public' declaration of my right to be listened to for what I truly was and loved. But, as I was growing older and felt myself being part of the greater world, my microphone turned to become my participation in communities with the same interests and ideals for social justice. Borrowing Pascal Gielen's (2011) words, "these worlds of stateless communities develop their own economies of leisure, pleasure, love, and knowledge, as islands within neoliberal hegemony." (Gielen, 2011, p.33) What made me feel comfortable, liberated within those small communities was a sense of mutual trust, support and commitment to a common cause.

When I moved to the Netherlands I felt as if somebody has taken this 'microphone' out of my hands. I felt hesitant and afraid to act. I attributed my inertia to the fact that I was an outsider here, I didn't belong. But, as Audre Lorde (1984) wrote "the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that is always fraught with danger." (Lorde, 1984, p.42) My need to transform my own silence into action, to claim my own agency in my new environment was what sparked this research.

My research journey and my practice evolved similarly as my childhood's 'public' voice. From grabbing the microphone and eagerly sharing my curiosities, my initial experiments acted more as self-directed learning experiences. Alongside researching the ideas and work of other artists, theorists, and educators, these projects helped me develop my understanding of the concepts I was investigating, such as the concept of agency. In addition, they informed my assumptions regarding practical challenges, planning and facilitating artistic educational experiences. At the same time, they generated more doubts and curiosities and led me to formulate my research question: How can we weave artistic and educational strategies into a learning structure that facilitates the development of a listening consciousness within the context of a small community?

Positioning myself more comfortably and firmly in a practice that lies in the boundaries between education and art, my fingers, that were holding the microphone tight, almost squeezing it, gradually loosened and formed a new gesture. I passed the microphone around, to communities which I relate to in the everyday and placed it in the middle of a circle of bodies and voices, to witness how we come together, how we talk and listen collectively. This act is in the end phantom power, the move from individual to collective agency, a move that happens through the process of listening and being listened to within a community.

I invite you to experience this research as a reader and a listener, as it unfolds in the form of a text and an audio mixtape similarly as my research journey and practice. Clicking on the images of the audio cassettes, that you will come across, you can listen to the audio part. Side A of the mixtape contains my experiments that move along with my theoretical research. These small projects with the titles welkom

in deze buurt, Reading, Listening and Reacting and Looking for Agency were quite significant in the development of my educational project. Side B includes pieces of the educational project, a network of small listening gestures.

In the textual part of this document, I firstly illustrate the pedagogical and political significance of training ourselves to listen and developing a collective listening consciousness. I specifically focus on the experience of listening together within the small communities, in which we co-exist and relate to in the everyday. Therefore, I am looking at artistic and activist practices, that revolve around listening as a political act and a pedagogical space, such as the work of the sound art and political collective Ultra-Red. At the same time, I examine forms of organizing on a micro-political scale, such as the Feminist Consciousness Raising Groups, that managed to translate personal issues of the everyday to larger social issues through a process of caring for each other, talking and listening. Furthermore, I draw from the pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire to advocate for the urgency of a listening consciousness, and for transforming the relationship of facilitator-participants in a more horizontal, non-hierarchical structure. Finally, inspired by the methodology of Critical Performative Pedagogy, I contemplate on the relationship between the analytical and the affective experience in learning and listening together.

Supported by this theoretical framework and influenced by many more artists, writers, educators, and other inspiring individuals- whom I will refer to in this narration of my research journey- I experiment and reflect on artistic strategies and pedagogical methods to create the structure for a workshop, that exists as a dynamic living organism. By appearing temporarily within a small community, the workshop invites the community to develop a listening consciousness togeth-

er. The apparitions of the workshop constitute a network, which I call a network of small listening gestures. These gestures function as triggers to reflect on the way we process and interpret sounds, the power that lies within that, and the potential to cultivate the conditions for a solidary society by challenging the terms of audibility.

how can borrowed, prosthetic memories reinforce the feeling of belonging?

how can one (re)claim agency in a new environment?

how does community sound like?

how can the neighborhood become a learning space?

welkom in deze buurt

how do we come together and become a community?

how does the physical environment resonate the community?

welkom in deze buurt is a project based on the idea, that displacement reduces one's capacity to act. With this project, I proposed that by acquiring a set of prosthetic memories, a new resident, such as myself, could bond with the space in a spiritual sense. In that way, their feeling of belonging would be reinforced and it would be the first step towards (re)claiming agency in the new environment. The process of collecting memories involved three parallel paths; a) The retrieval of information regarding the area from official sources (research in archives and historical references), b) urban explorations, that involved the documentation and interpretation of the signs in the neighborhood and finally c) oral histories interviews; the approach of long-term residents in my neighborhood, and the collection of some of their personal memories.

References in the audio piece: G.Perec-Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, G.Agamben-Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life, K.Bigelow-Strange Days, P. Tan-Beneath Our Skin, A. Landsberg-Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner.

FROM MACRO TO MICRO: THE URGENCY FOR A LISTENING LITERACY

In our speech-centric society, the value of listening is highly disregarded. My initial interest in listening and the societal terms of audibility started from my concerns around human mobility and the disabling effect on people's agency. I have been feeling frustrated by the terms under which narratives of displaced people are granted audibility: either to cause feelings of fear and hatred or sentiments of 'humanitarian generosity'. I strongly believe that both of these conditions result in reinforcing stereotypes regarding people's identity, and consequently divide people in two categories and reproduce uneven relationships: the locals and the outsiders, the rightful and the illegitimate, the hosts and the guests, the audible and the silent.

In her book *The Politics of Listening*, Leah Bassel (2017) argues that our society is constructed on selective audibility. Voices are amplified only under certain conditions, that serve the mainstream neoliberal narrative and reinforce the binary division of society, which I described above. Our society accepts two intelligible subject positions for the voices of the minorities according to Bassel (2017): the victims and the entrepreneurs. Outside of these subject positions, people often face disbelief, stigmatization, and hostility. Let us consider an imaginary example of two different voices, two different narratives for a Muslim woman living in a European country. One that would speak about abuse and oppression from the men with the same religious beliefs. The other would speak about strong family bonds, love, respect, and support in her community. Which voice would be amplified, and which would be silenced?

The inequality in listening is not only evident in the news and the wider circulation of stories in society, but we can also perceive it if we reflect on how we listen to the people around us in our daily interactions. I will try to clarify this with an example from my everyday life. In my workplace, we welcomed recently a new employee from Syria. When he introduced himself and told me where he was coming from, the first image that came to my mind was that of war and destruction. Some days before, I had watched the lecture of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) *The danger of a single story*, where she beautifully talks about the stereotypes that are being created when we reduce people to one single story. I realized, that I had a single story for my new colleague, related to the ongoing war. I felt ashamed for ignoring the plethora of stories, positive and negative, that have shaped him. "The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult." (Adichie, 2009, 13:45) Thus, to trace inequalities of listening, we don't have to look far, we can find them within ourselves and our everyday relations. The way we listen, how we filter and interpret the different voices and their respective sources, can have an enabling or disabling effect for individuals and communities.

Pauline Oliveros, an experimental composer and pioneer of electronic music, mentioned in an interview, that is provided online by the RubinMuseum (2016), that we can't train our ears and how we hear, but we can train the way we listen. Ultra-Red (2012), a sound art collective that work with listening as a political and pedagogical tool, also highlight the need for a listening literacy. Reflecting on the importance of listening, and questioning how we listen is crucial to challenge the current terms of audibility, enable individual and collective agency and move towards a

more egalitarian society. In my opinion, to attain a listening literacy, the first step is to develop a listening consciousness, meaning to realize the need for a listening literacy and experiment with how we listen and are listened to within our communities.

TOWARDS A LISTENING CONSCIOUSNESS

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator, whose work is still largely influential to practitioners who move between the realms of art, education, and activism. His educational philosophy, known as Critical Pedagogy, advocates that education is inextricably connected to politics. Critical pedagogy is centered around the concept of dialogue. The core of the dialogue is the word; "within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed-even in part-the other immediately suffers." (Freire, 1970, p.68). Namely, without action we fall into the trap of verbalism, while if we neglect reflection, action becomes solely activist. Ultra-Red also suggest that an action-only practice is not enough to bring change. "Activism only uses the microphone to amplify oneself. Activism gives priority to action alone." (Ultra-Red, 2008, p.6) Drawing from practices of popular education, their work privileges reflection and analysis in the organization of listening as well as political action. According to Freire (1970) action and reflection constitute together the *praxis*, through which transformation is possible.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire's (1970) most famous work, he coined the term *critical consciousness (conscientização)*

to refer to the awareness of the systemic inequalities and the actions that we take against social, political and economic oppression. By awakening critical consciousness, and fulfilling both dimensions of the word (action and reflection) the oppressed can transform the existing societal order. The listening consciousness that I argue, is rooted in Freire's concept of critical consciousness and refers specifically to the awareness of inequalities in the ways we listen and are listened to. When we become attentive towards the Other, and towards the sounds that we are receiving, the interpretations that we make and the way we iterate them back to the world, we develop a listening awareness, the consciousness of a collective. This awareness is the first step in transforming the terms of audibility on a micro- and macro-political scale.

Both listening and awareness are often identified as passive states of being and existing in society. On the contrary, I want to emphasize, that these two acts mean active engagement in a dialogue, critical reflection and doubt. "Listening is an active verb that involves giving meaning and value to the perspective of others, a form of assessment. This kind of listening is a way of welcoming the others and their differences, and a way of welcoming different theories and perspectives." (Rinaldi, 2004, p.3) In other words, listening means to realize we are part of a greater community.

During the first year of my research I was using the term 'holistic listening' to communicate, that listening is not about the sound itself, but it is about attentiveness, care and sharing. It is about understanding how we come together, how we interact, what are the force fields that influence and direct our existence in society, and what are the urgencies for change, the possibilities for transformation. "Listening

involves assigning meaning to our own social relations and amplifying and transforming the way space is produced and accounted for." (Fischer, 2014, p.13).

Berit Fischer (2014)[1], citing Jean-Luc Nancy, also refers to the notion of listening as connected with tension, intention, and attention. These three attributes of listening appear to me as utterly linked to art, education and community practices. Tension, agitation, restlessness entails a notion of change and friction, a revolutionary potential. Intention reveals clarity and a pedagogical vision, attention is an essential element of care and solidarity. Considering the concept of a non-sovereign agency in relation to listening, I see listening also connected with accountability. When we listen, we take responsibility for what we are hearing, for the filters that we apply on the auditory information and its respective source, for the impact that our stance has to the Other's agency. A listening consciousness is a state that includes all the above-mentioned features; intention, attention, tension, and accountability.

From my perspective, to achieve any social change, we must first start small, by examining our everyday interactions and begin change from there. The small intimate communities, that we form with friends, partners, families, colleagues, peers, comrades, entail great pedagogical potential and political significance. At the same time, it is equally important to be mobilized by an ideal, a greater vision of social transformation. In the case of my research, I am starting on a foundational level together with communities that exist in my immediate environment. In that way, I am

[1]Berit Fischer is an independent curator and writer currently based in Berlin. In 2013 she co-curated with Kevin Muhlen the exhibition *HLYSNAN: The Notion and Politics of Listening* at Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'art contemporain in Luxembourg and edited the accompanying publication under the same title.

building a network of temporary alliances, whose purpose is to develop a collective listening consciousness. Within a series of single encounters with four different groups, I create ways to raise discussions and trigger reflections on how we listen on a micro-political scale. Simultaneously, I envision the future possibility of this network expanding and these alliances multiplying to larger formations of conscious listeners. In that scenario, the transformation of the societal terms of audibility would be possible.

how can we build a learning context to enable self-expression through the process of listening?

how can we inspire debates on the ways we exist in new cultures and environments through reading, listening, and making to-

how do we come together as a community?
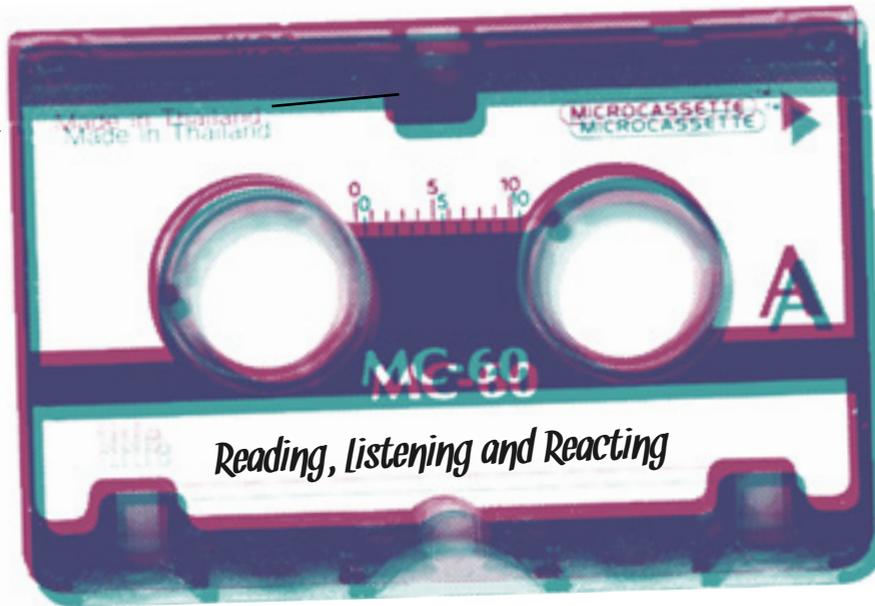
Reading, Listening and Reacting

what role does intimacy play in learning?

how can we subvert the traditional roles of facilitator-participants?

Reading, Listening and Reacting was a workshop realised in Leeszaal Rotterdam West*, where I was volunteering, in collaboration with my fellow student and artist Amy Pickles. Through the process of collective reading, listening and poster-making we dealt with literary themes around memory, identity and displacement.
*Leeszaal Rotterdam West is a radical library and community center, that was set up in response to the closure of all public library facilities in the neighborhood in 2012.

References in the audio piece: I.Calvino-Invisible cities.

Nowadays, we notice an increase in radical learning experiments, that are being developed inside or adjacent to institutions, in community centers, art spaces, and informal settings. In their book *Contestations: Learning from Critical Experiments in Education*, Tim Ivison & Tom Vandeputte (2013) explore education both as a field of experimentation and as a mode of political and social organization. They examine practices that happen "in the cracks of the institutions and what lies beyond their walls" (Ivison & Vandeputte, 2013, p.29).

These are exactly the territories where I am interested in operating, a place in-between, where we can exploit the goods of the formal structures, for instance, the facilities of an institution without losing the vision for an education free of the neoliberal bonds, such as assessment criteria, tuition fees and so on. My chosen authors are helping me compose the tactics towards such a post-neoliberal learning experiment. They emphasize the political character of educational experiments, whose aim is "cultivating discourse and community, raising consciousness, formulating new problems and finding new strategies of response." (Ivison & Vandeputte, 2013, p.25).

An example of a radical educational structure is *The Silent University*. Initiated in 2012 by the artist Ahmet Öğüt, *The Silent University* is an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for individuals who cannot share their knowledge due to their status of residence. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, that have had academic training in their home countries, contribute to the program as lecturers,

consultants, and researchers. Its branches spread across the cities of Amman, Athens, Hamburg, London, Mülheim/Ruhr, and Stockholm. Founded on solidarity, this platform proposes a new "strategy of response" to migration policies that hinder the human right to learn and grow. The Silent University is an example of how we can devise new learning structures tailored to a community's urgencies and resources by circumventing the disciplinary orders of art and education.

I am not advocating for the success of all such experiments, but I am looking at them with hope. Hope that they can open up spaces for doubt, for collectivity, for experiencing together, for care and intimacy, for listening and being listened to. But also hope for spaces of friction and tension. A tension when we listen together, when we reflect and are critical as a collective, a tension that comes from realizing the potential to change the things we oppose to.

As the writer Rebecca Solnit (2016) beautifully describes, "To hope is to gamble. It's to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet it is the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk." (Solnit, 2016, p.4) That is how I believe we should undertake learning experiences; embracing uncertainty with hope and an open heart, being guided by intentions and curiosities instead of expectations and outcomes. Given these factors, how can I create a structure that exists between art and education to challenge the terms of audibility on a micro-political level?

The workshop is a very popular model of learning in formal and non-formal education in a wide range of disciplines. It suggests a single or a limited amount of encounters and revolves around a specific subject. It usually implies

a hands-on approach to learning, that combines practical exercises, verbal transmission of knowledge and discussions. In the case of my research project, the core of my network is a workshop, that exists as a living organism, whose intentions and basic elements remain the same, but it adapts each time to the community, in which it temporarily appears and relates to. In each gesture, the workshop informs and is informed by the group of people who interact with it. In that way, the workshop feeds and is fed, and so it evolves, becomes stronger and prepares for its next apparition.

RADICAL ORGANIZING OF LISTENING AND LEARNING

"When listening does work and connects to politics, this can be through horizontal patterns of exchange that seek the path to the experiences of others. New possibilities for political equality then emerge which also make vertical claims on powerful actors." (Bassel, 2017, p.11) Bassel (2017) is referring here to practices of citizen journalism, self-organized creative mediated practices and solidarity movements. Drawing from that, I looked in the field of art for practices that create such "horizontal patterns of exchange" and connect listening to politics.

In the contemporary art scene there are several inspiring artists whose work revolves around sound and the process of

listening in relation to politics; Ultra-Red, Brandon LaBelle, Hong-Kai Wang, Anton Kats and Lawrence Abu Hamdan among others. For my research, I focused on the practice of the international sound art and political collective Ultra-Red, because of the strong pedagogical character of their work. The collective was founded in 1994 by two ACT UP activists and expanded over the years to include artists, researchers, and organizers from different social movements. Since 2001, their practice shifted from composing sound to the organization of the process of listening.

Ultra-Red engage together with communities in *militant sound investigations*, namely collective listening experiences, that are guided by a set of protocols. The choice of words that name their approach indicates their political commitment as well as their analytical and structured methods.

Militant sound investigations derive from the record of needs, desires, and demands of a community and are both conditioned and condition an environment of trust. They employ certain technologies, such as the microphone, flip-chart paper, and markers, to organize the silence and subsequently the listening process within the community. "The Militant Sound Investigation holds that listening in the field of sound is the site and the means for the organization of politics." (Ultra-Red, 2008, p.7) From short to long-term collaborations with communities, these investigations are situated within contemporary social struggles across Europe and America, such as anti-racism, migration struggles, issues of housing justice, the politics of HIV/AIDS and so on.

The protocols that guide militant sound investigations are sets of instructions that Ultra-Red composed to facilitate the organization of the listening process. They encourage for an analytical approach to the process of listening within a com-

munity, which I believe is essential in order to understand the conditions under which we listen to each other and translate them to the conditions under which the struggles of communities become audible in society.

I was already researching and studying the work of Ultra-Red for some months, when I participated in the workshop *You are already in it* by Elizabeth Graham[1] and Amal Khalaf[2] at the Master Education in Arts of Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. The workshop touched upon listening as a pedagogical space for collectivity, reciprocity, and care. Among readings, discussions, and performative exercises, we also performed the *Protocol for a Listening Session* by Ultra-Red. Experiencing as a participant some of the things that I have been reading helped me gain a better understanding of Ultra-Red's work, the process of a collective listening session and its effect.

Our facilitators posed the question "what is the sound of solidarity?" and they asked us to send beforehand some short sound recordings as a response. The initial search for the meaning and sound of solidarity felt both complex and exciting— how could a sound relate to a concept? I began reflecting on the concept of solidarity, and how it manifests in my life. During the workshop, sharing and listening to each other's interpretations helped us as a group to transition from individual to collective reflection. It was a trigger to see how different personal conceptions of solidarity can

form a collective more informed understanding of the concept, that is more related to the common social reality of the group. Performing the protocol felt as if we were giving time and value to silence, to the process of listening and in the end to the process of coming and being together.

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[1]Elizabeth Graham is a curator and educator based between London and Amsterdam. She is currently Assistant Projects Curator at the Serpentine Galleries, and also a tutor of Self-Directed Research at the Master Education in Arts of Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam.
[2]Amal Khalaf is an artist, researcher and currently Projects Curator at the Serpentine Galleries, working on the Edgware Road Project since its inception in 2009.

how can a sound resonate a concept?

how does agency manifest in different social contexts?

how do we come together as a community?

how can we enable individual and collective agency?

how can friendship become a site for learning?

Looking for Agency

Looking for Agency was a project realised in Pertouli and Thessaloniki, Greece together with my partner and a group of close friends. It involved a series of collective soundwalks to investigate the concept of agency. The first soundwalk was performed in the forests of Pertouli. We would listen and record our surroundings using stereo audio recorders and we would follow the sounds to create our own itineraries in the forest. The second soundwalk was performed in the urban environment of Thessaloniki, my hometown. The instruction was short and complex at the same time; to do a soundwalk in the city contemplating on the question: 'What and where is agency in Thessaloniki?'. There wasn't a specific path, that we had to follow, instead we would follow the sounds and our instincts to 'discover' the sound of agency. The third soundwalk was planned similarly to the second one, and ultimately resulted in a long theoretical debate in an intimate atmosphere.

Agency is constituted through action and interaction between three different parts; the individual, the society and the material world. The individual initiates an act. At the same time the societal context in which the individual exists, affects that act by confirming or rejecting the actor as an agent and thus the act as valid and agentic. The (in)validation of the act by the society is a result of the identity of the individual and their position in the world. Finally, the third part that plays a vital role in the constitution of agency, is the material world, the physical world. Our initiatives are always in interaction with the matter that surrounds them, with physical forces such as gravity. We usually neglect the contribution of the material world to the constitution of agency, mainly because we tend to initiate our acts within a familiar environment and situations.

References in the audio piece: S. Krause - Agency.

ACTING ON A MICRO LEVEL

A powerful example of micro-political organizing were the feminist Consciousness-Raising Groups (C-R), that appeared in the 1960s in the United States of America and quickly spread across other Western countries. As the New York Radical Feminists' (1976) guide to C-R groups suggests, the purpose of these groups was to develop an awareness regarding the systemic oppression of women and to encourage unity and identification with other women. Claudia Firth and Lucia Farinati (2017), in their book *The Force of Listening*, interview the anthropologist Pat Caplan and the artist Anna Sherbany for their experiences and involvement in C-R groups in the 1970s, in an attempt to unravel how listening worked within these groups. They mention, that their process was more about talking and listening as a whole activity, rather than collective listening. These small-women-only groups provided a safe space to talk about women's experiences and problems. In each meeting, they would usually select a specific topic and everyone would share their opinion and personal experience related to that. When the group was bigger, they would usually break it into smaller groups, so that they could maintain a non-hierarchical structure and make sure that everybody is listened to.

Although C-R groups were an integral part of the second-wave feminist movement, debates were raised amongst women whether these functioned as a political tool, or as personal, therapeutic sessions. This is also a question that I had myself in the past regarding working on a micro-level, where intimacy and personal experiences are central— does the personal benefit override the collective, the political? I firmly agree with Carol Hanisch's (1969) statement "One of

the first things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution." (Hanisch, 1969, p.4) From this statement, we can deduct, that the so-called personal problems have a social root, they reflect larger social issues. And therefore, we must bring them forward and act on them collectively. The listening filters, for example, inhabit each of us, but they are not germinated by our brains. These filters are a social construction. As the C-R groups did, I believe, that we also need to work within our small communities to understand this connection between systemic oppression and individual issues, and through talking and listening, to find the language to make this connection visible/audible.

Henry Giroux, in a lecture provided online by the MacPherson Institute (2015), also talks about our inability to translate private troubles into larger social issues: "We've lost the language of translation. So that everything is individualized. We now individualized the social. When we talk about poverty we talk about lifestyles, when we talk about homelessness we talk about character. When we talk about racism, we talk about ignorance. All the systemic metaphors disappear, which makes people powerless because they blame themselves.[..] Blaming themselves for a system that failed them. Because they had no other language." (MacPherson Institute, 2015, 44:00)

I want to point out, that being not the ones to blame, does not mean we are not accountable for changing the existing conditions. Instead, this 'translation' helps us realize that we are subjects of oppression by the neoliberal system, and it is our collective responsibility to react on that. It is an important step, that facilitates the transition from guilt and self-blame to accountability and action.

The C-R groups showed us, that groups acting on a micro-level, can connect the personal to the social, and in that way become vehicles for collective agency. Their legacy demonstrates, that translating individual problems to collective, identifying with others, do not deprive us of our uniqueness. Instead, it makes us stronger together and individually. These intimate safe-to-share-and-act communities contributed to women's empowerment and fed their struggles on a macro-political level. Of course solely such endeavors cannot bring wider social change but they are the foundation, on which we need to work, in order to oppose effectively to the dominant vertical structures.

My research project, the network of small gestures, spreads to four different micro-contexts, that I relate to in the everyday. It started with a community very close to me, six young artists with diverse practices, currently residing in Rotterdam. It continued with a group, that I interact daily, the colleagues at my workplace, a group of after-school teachers. Subsequently, it moved a bit further, in the context of Café Chercher[3] and met people interested and involved in academic research in the realms of art and science. Finally, it extended to a first-year classroom at the Royal Academy of Arts in the Hague (KABK), where my fellow student Susana Carvalho teaches Graphic Design. These small communities indicate very different interpersonal relationships and points of connection between me and the group,

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[3]Café Chercher is a platform to present unfinished research projects, that exist between the realms of art and science. In an informal and intimate atmosphere, this art cafe becomes once per month a place to share questions and doubts, but also to try out ideas and prototypes. Participants are practitioners, students, Ph.D. researchers, and professors from a wide variety of disciplines and institutions. The contributions are usually based on an unfinished research project and can take different forms such as artworks, performances, workshops and so on.

but also between the group members themselves.

These distinctions translate to different levels of intimacy, authority, connectedness and shared interests, experience and knowledge regarding my particular research field. These are all parameters, that influenced the decisions I made in the planning of each gesture, and the outcome of the workshop in each context.

For example, with the first group, we are all connected through our common interests and diverse practices in the field of art and have all studied or are still studying on a Master level in art academies in the Netherlands. This translates to an ease concerning academic language in the artistic disciplines and many shared references. In contrast, when planning the second workshop I took into account, that my co-learners were strangers to my research and practice. They were also not accustomed to participating in similar events and workshops. That led me to choose a different set of references and transform the exercises in something closer to our common practice, our work with children 3-12 years old, such as a collective storytelling activity based on sounds.

Apart from these different points of connection, the synthesis of each group indicated a unique level of intimacy and hierarchy that is produced. For example, in the case of Café Chercher participants might not be united by bonds of friendship or collegiality and many of them meet for the very first time, but there is a level of care and solidarity that grows out of shared curiosities and love for research. Furthermore, the open call attendance results in a feeling of an exchange between peers, a horizontal structure of co-learners. In contrast, in the following case of the classroom at KABK, I was initially concerned that the existing hierarchy

of teacher-students would be difficult to reduce, especially because of the mandatory participation to the class, that is dictated by the studies. Of course, in this particular class guided by Carvalho, the students had already worked on the ideas of the assembly and with ways of transforming the traditional one-directional relationship between teacher-student into an exchange, where both parts are equally acknowledged for their skills and knowledge. Together with Carvalho, we discussed and planned the workshop to devise ways to flatten the hierarchy and make everyone feel equally responsible and equally valuable for this learning experience.

TIME TO FLIP THE TAPE OVER

Looking back, I realize that through the process of listening, my first projects were more about reclaiming my own individual agency and fitting in new communal settings, such as my neighborhood, or the community library, where I was volunteering. Reflecting on my three initial experiments and taking into consideration the feedback from my collaborators and participants along with the development of my theoretical research informed the design of my educational project. First, they reinforced my idea that listening together can not only act as a trigger to conversations and debates but also as a community building experience. Furthermore, I arrived at a concept of non-sovereign agency and realized that sharing and listening to personal stories can be enabling for other people's agency. By investigating structures in the fields of art, activism, and education, where listening together becomes the means to collective agency, I

concluded, that the workshop should have a structure that would gradually facilitate different levels of engagement and combine an analytical with an affective experience. As a result, I designed the educational project as *a network of small listening gestures*.

My chosen title for the project refers to the concept of Mika Hannula (2006) in his book *The Politics of Small Gestures*. Hannula (2006) defines a small meaningful gesture by juxtaposing it to the big gesture; the small gesture is not about universal effects, but it is about a process, a series of small significant steps towards a certain goal, which will never be fully achieved. "The small gesture is very happy if and when it is sometimes able to make a smallish dent in our ways of comprehending and perceiving ourselves in our surroundings; who we are, where we are, with whom we are and what kind of relationships we have with our surroundings and also with ourselves." (Hannula, 2006 , p.14)

how can we weave artistic strategies and pedagogical methods into a learning structure, that facilitates the development of a collective listening consciousness on a micro-political scale?

how do we come together, collaborate and co-exist in small communities?

how can we create a learning experience as a living organism, that can exist in diverse contexts?

a network of small listening gestures
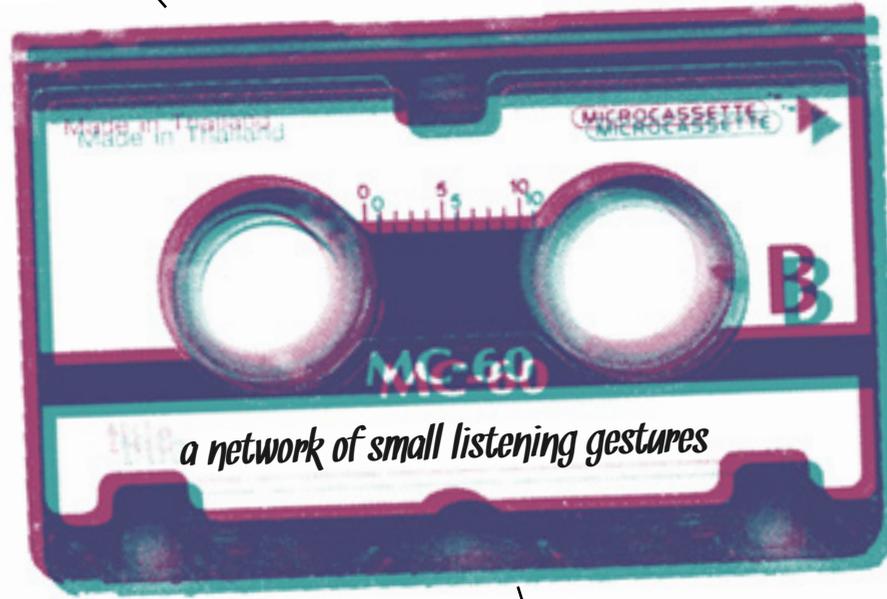
how can we raise conversations regarding the terms of audibility in our society?

how can we move from individual to collective agency through listening?

how can we facilitate learning experiences where hierarchies are reduced or eliminated, and where we all participate as co-learners?

a network of small gestures is a series of four workshops on how we listen within the small communities of the everyday. These workshops, which I call gestures, act together as a whole, as a network, as iterations of one body. Each gesture creates a temporary alliance, by reflecting on who we are, how we listen and how we co-exist in society, suggesting alternative ways of being, listening and learning together.

METHODS OF DOCUMENTATION AND REFLECTION

The tools used for the documentation of the gestures were slightly different for each context and were approved by the participants beforehand. In all cases, I privileged audio recordings because from my past experience as a participant, I consider it to feel less invasive and distracting. In some contexts, that were more comfortable and familiar with visual documentation, I used that as well. The audio documentation was an essential tool for me to reflect on the workshops. Returning back after each gesture, listening to the session, and especially to the conversations and the feedback was crucial in the planning of the next iteration.

During the planning of the gestures, a method to reflect on and develop my approach was discussing it beforehand with people, who are involved in each community. For example, for the gesture at Café Chercher, I asked feedback from Emily Huurdeman, one of the organizers of the event. After the performance of each gesture, my primary source for reflection was the feedback from the group, during the open discussion time. Listening back to the audio documentation, I made observations and transcriptions for the dialogues that took place. The feedback from the community during the reflection time was complemented by informal conversations with individuals after the end of each session.

In addition, in the first two gestures, my role was more instructive and I was not involved in all the performative exercises. This gave me the opportunity to observe the group and draw some conclusions regarding their experience based on their bodily reactions. In the other two

gestures, where we employed a collective score to become equal co-learners, I was able to become deeply involved in the experience and contemplate on my personal affect as well. Active participation is a method used by performance ethnographers: "Sensuous engagement and kinesthetic empathy between researchers and subjects can best illuminate the experiential complexities of human interaction, the texture of a living moment. By cultivating a deep, multisensory awareness of how persons appear to inhabit, experience, and negotiate their shared space, performance ethnographers are able to attend to the embodied particularities of the research situation." (Pineau, 2002, p.47)

A sound recorder was my primary tool for documentation and reflection.

BUILDING A TOOLKIT FOR A SMALL LISTENING GESTURE: COMMUNITY

In retrospect, I realize, that the word community is at the beginning and the core of my research. Community can be defined in general as a body of individuals linked together through a common characteristic. Each person relates willingly or unwillingly to multiple communities. We relate to friends with common lived experiences, comrades with similar goals and ideologies, families with whom we share care and affection, strangers with the same nationality or citizenship, and so on. Our participation in these might be temporary, permanent, or sporadical. Community entails a notion of sharing and at the same time a notion of distinction as opposed to other communities and individuals who do not share this specific trait. A community in such an abstract sense does not presuppose togetherness and is not enough to challenge the norms of audibility.

Togetherness, though, is essential for a small listening gesture. Bassel (2017)[1] insists on the need to work together towards an 'Us' instead of a divided society of 'Us and Them'. The objective of a politics of listening is acting together in a way so that future action is possible. In the network of small gestures, each community of peers is reconfigured the moment we come together and commit to the process of listening with tension, intention, attention and accountability. Thus, it becomes a committed community to learning and listening together.

The different ways of coming and being together are beautifully described by the artist Brandon LaBelle in *Lecture of an Acoustics of Sharing*. LaBelle (2014) suggests three auditory figures— the echo, the vibration and the rhythm — as metaphors of how we form communities. With the echo, we form our individual and collective identity. The moment that exists between two iterations, entails an opportunity to differentiate ourselves, to subvert any given identities. Vibration manifests when we come together, and unite our individual strengths, our individual voices and bodies. Vibrating means shaking, oscillating and moving together for a common cause. The rhythm is about recognizing the design of our environment, the structures in which we operate. By becoming aware of that, we can map our own trajectory to move within the existing order.

I see the process of listening as the element that transforms these different types of sociality into processes and spaces for individual and collective agency. For example, the process of echoing could manifest as simply repeating, copying or performing a given identity. Only if we really listen, we can understand the information we receive, process them and iterate them differentiated, subverted back to the world. The C-R groups, for instance, through the process of caring for each other, talking and listening, translated society's given identity of the woman as connected to oppressive social and political interests and in that way, they opened up the possibility to subvert that identity and assign new meanings to it. Furthermore, through vibration and rhythm, we can create the social and material conditions for collective agency[2], only

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[1]Bassel(2017) refers in *The Politics of Listening* to Us the audible, and Them the silenced, stigmatized Others.

[2]I refer here to Sharon Krause's(2012) definition of non-sovereign agency as a socially and materially distributed phenomenon. In that view, agency requires the exercise of individual will, but it also requires efficacy, an impact on the world, which is only happening in relation to other social and material actors.

if the listening consciousness of a community is active. By challenging the terms of audibility and the listening filters that permeate our relationships when we come together, we can enable each other's agency. If we truly listen we can recognize the structure of our environment and re-design it in ways that are enabling our collective agency. In the *network of small gestures*, resonating the ideas of the echo, the vibration, and the rhythm, I developed performative exercises through which we experienced, questioned and reconsidered the ways we come, listen and move together within our small communities.

Reflecting on my research journey, practical and theoretical, I identify three strands that we should consider when developing structures to facilitate the process of listening together: the issue of authority, the affective, and the cognitive experience.

QUESTIONING AUTHORITY

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970) writes about the *banking concept of education*. With that term, Freire (1970) refers to the traditional educational model, where the teacher is the transmitter of knowledge and students are the ignorant passive receptors. "The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students' creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed." (Freire, 1970, p.54)

Throughout my research, I have experimented with the role of the instructor, facilitator, initiator, or co-learner and investigated ways to flatten hierarchies and create a listening and learning context, where everybody feels, that their voice, knowledge, and experience have value. Consequently, I acknowledge that the relationship of teacher-student, facilitator-participant, or artist-community carries unavoidably a relative authoritative weight, which we must recognize and at the same time consciously pursue to reduce. Otherwise, the hierarchy that is produced might reinforce oppression, as Freire (1970) suggests, and act conversely to a liberating participatory experience.

SETTING THE INTENTIONS

From my first experiments at Leeszaal and in Greece, I realized that although the lack of expected outcomes and assessment criteria could be emancipatory for the learning experience, ambiguity and a lack of direction could also be harmful. They create confusion, false expectations and subsequently reinforce an uneven relationship between facilitator and participants. Thus, communicating clearly the intentions of a participatory experience means creating more equal and liberating conditions for learning and experiencing. But how can intentions not be perceived as expectations?

In their militant sound investigations, Ultra-Red use questions, that take the form "What is the sound of…?" and "What did you hear?". These questions connect to the experiences and concerns of the community, which they work

with. "The question guides us to listen for what it is about our world we want to keep, what we don't want, and what we want but do not have… the question helps the team act into thinking, that is grounded in a sustained investigation of the conditions of the community." (Ultra Red, 2014, p.10)

I see the concept of questions as a potentially powerful tool to direct learning experiences. The question shows a collective course of action and creates space for doubt and reflection. When posing an expectation the needs of the institution, the teacher, the facilitator, the artist become the priority, their level of authority is increased. When suggesting a question, the learning experience becomes a process of exploration and discovery, that is adaptable to the community of learners, a process where hierarchies are reduced.

In the network of small listening gestures, each workshop was guided by certain directives, that expressed the intentions of the project and connected to the urgencies of the respective community. Reflecting on the directives was crucial in the planning, as all exercises would be centered around them. In the implementation, they appeared other times boldly as direct questions, for example, as the question "what is the desired rhythm of the classroom?", that was posed in the workshop with the students at KABK, where together we had to investigate the design of the classroom environment and reimagine it through a sound collage. Other times the directives appeared in a subtle way when contextualizing an experience.

Contextualization included references to the work of artists and theorists, who inspire and inform my research and who could potentially be interesting and relevant to a specific community. For example, the workshop with my colleagues concluded by listening to a part of the talk *The danger*

of a single story by the writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In this way, I suggested a theoretical lens to refract the affective experiences of the workshop. A suggestion, through which I made my motives and curiosities transparent. In the end, my colleagues admitted that the talk of Adichie, was very important for them, as it helped them comprehend the context of the workshop.

On the one hand, contextualizing an experience beforehand is setting the intentions clear and helps reduce a hierarchy, that is present because of differences in knowledge and experience regarding this particular research topic. On the other hand, too much contextualization and an emphasis on intentions might create the feeling of expected outcomes and consequently add to the participants an unnecessary filter for their performance. I discussed this issue with Emily Huurdeman, one of the organizers of Café Chercher, and Susana Carvalho, the teacher at KABK, when I was preparing for the respective gestures. We concluded that it would fit more in the case of Café Chercher to give less contextualization beforehand so that the participants experience more openly the exercises and rather share my interpretation after. For the gesture at KABK, we decided that it would be best to make more clear the context and intentions before the students engaged in the exercises. These decisions were based mostly on the differences regarding the existing hierarchy of roles, knowledge, and experiences within these distinct micro-communities. I consequently believe that there is no standard solution for "how much" one should contextualize. To find the right balance, in my opinion, one must examine the conditions of the community they collaborate.

how do we come together, collaborate, and co-exist within and across art communities?

what is the sound of collaboration?

how can we move from individual to collective reflection through listening together?

how can we raise conversations regarding the terms of audibility in our society?

In the first gesture, with the group of Rotterdam-based artists, we started the workshop by performing the Protocol for a Listening Session by Ultra-Red. Everyone had sent beforehand a sound that responds to the question "What is the sound of collaboration?". I assumed the role of the facilitator and we followed the steps 1-5 from the protocol. Meaning that we would listen in silence to each sound, that they had picked, and then I would ask the question 'What did you hear?'. We would write our thoughts down on the shared paper, and after one minute I would call TIME. The person who chose the respective sound piece, would then share the story behind the sound, the reason why they chose this recording. We would all listen silently to the narration and then I would ask again 'What did you hear?'. For one minute again we would write down our answers and then I would call TIME. This process opened up the discourse on how we collaborate within our artistic practices and across disciplines, but also how we interpret sounds and the associations that we make. This audio piece contains bits of the discussions that took place mixed together with the chosen sounds of collaboration by the participants.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

In the first gesture, when we were performing the *Protocol for a Listening Session* by Ultra-Red, my uneasiness with the role of the instructor led me eventually to stop announcing 'Time' or asking 'What did you hear?' as the protocol suggests. Instead, I let the process flow on its own. Listening back to the documentation of the workshop and the feedback from the participants, I realized, that since I assumed that role I needed to be more guiding, also for the following performative exercises, meaning to give more detailed instructions. Thus, I decided to assume again this role for the gesture with my colleagues but being more clear and instructive. This worked well, in the sense that there was no ambiguity or confusion between the participants. However, I still wanted to investigate structures that encourage the community to share responsibility and authority and not put myself or any other individual in a single position of power. "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students." (Freire, 1970, p.53)

For this reason, I wrote a collective score for the other two gestures, that we would all read and follow together. This had the format of a scripted narration interrupted by instructions for performative exercises. In this way, we would all be accountable for the development of the workshop. The score helped us retain a structure and at the same time, it allowed all of us to become co-learners and co-facilitators. Listening back to the documentation and the feedback, I believe that the score contributed in reinforcing a feeling of unity and community. Diving into the ideas expressed in the

score was accomplished by complementing the words with the experience of reading and performing together. Furthermore, the score was something that everyone could keep and return to, whenever they wanted.

Reading together the score for the listening gesture at Café Chercher.
Video still by Emily Huurdeman.

how could the moment of echoing, of iterating become an opportunity to deviate from prescribed identities?

how do we form our individual and collective identity?

could echoing be an opportunity to listen?

how can we facilitate learning experiences where hierarchies are reduced or eliminated, and where we all participate as co-learners?

The small listening gesture at Café Chercher focused on the concept of the echo. With the use of a collective score I suggested a way to create a more horizontal learning experience, where everybody is a co-learner and co-facilitator. This audio piece documents the collective reading of the instructions to the performative exercises and the community echoing together.

EQUALIZING THE DISTANCE

Returning to the ideas of Krause (2012) on the connection between material environment and agency, I contemplate on how the arrangement of the physical space and the position of the bodies that inhabit it, can reduce hierarchies and enable collective agency within the context of a workshop. For this reason, I draw from my background in early childhood education but also from my participation in self-organized communal settings. In both cases, the physical space is a very important element that reflects the desired (anti-)hierarchy of relationships within the (learning) community. This relationship between ideology and spatial design is eloquently described by Jonas Staal[1] in his article *IDEOLOGY=FORM*: "Each spatial configuration, each object, each choreography inscribes a set of ideas into the performance of its actors. […] Ideology, in other words, has a material reality, which one can understand through morphology: through art." (Staal, 2016, p.4)

In the network of small gestures, the location, that would host the workshop, was dictated by each community. It would be the space, where this particular group normally meets (a living room, a staff room, the creative space of a university, a classroom), and consequently, the location that is most familiar and convenient for everyone involved. Intimacy would be reinforced by sharing a meal together, before or during the workshop. Sitting in a circular formation, either on the floor or around a table, was essential in every gesture.

From my experience as an early years teacher, the circle is a central shape in children's organizing and learning. Circle-time is the assembly of children in a circular formation in different parts of their day. It is a time and place dedicated to share and discuss individual and collective matters. It is a safe and caring space, where children learn from and about each other, organize their daily routine and become a community. Unfortunately, circle time disappears as children move further in primary and secondary education. We encounter again a form of circle-time, of assembling, occasionally in higher formal education, non-formal learning settings, or self-organized communal practices.

The circle, as a formation, attempts "to dislocate power from a clear center and instead engage in an egalitarian social composition in which the distance between people is equalized." (Staal, 2016, p.9) It creates an intimate space, where all voices are equally appreciated. It is a shape that reinforces the sense of togetherness. The circle also creates a space of care and tension, where the community forms its identity, debates and takes decisions. Therefore, I chose the circle as the main formation of the workshop, through which we would convene, interact, discuss and make sense together.

[1]Jonas Staal is an artist, whose work focuses on the relationship between art, democracy and propaganda. He is founder of the artistic and political organization New World Summit that develops alternative parliaments for stateless political movements.

Café Chercher takes place in VOX-POP, a location in the University of Amsterdam. For this workshop, we organized the space in three circular zones; in the center there were two small tables, on which I placed the materials needed (texts, papers, pencils and the audio recorder). Around them, we created a circular zone for the participants, with pillows on the floor. On the outer circular zone we placed chairs for the people, who wouldn't want to participate actively, but still wanted to be present.

In the classroom at KABK we performed the exercises on the echo and the vibration sitting in a circle. Image by Valentina Scaglia.

A HOLISTIC PROCESS: AFFECT AND COGNITION

"The ear hears. The brain listens. The body senses vibrations." (Oliveros, 2015, 02:45). This quote beautifully describes what I earlier named as holistic listening. A process that engages our whole being and requires not only our hearing sense but the coordination of as many sensorial mechanisms as possible. To develop a listening consciousness, it is not enough to simply talk and listen. We also need to experience together, to embody the act of listening and convening together in order to then reflect on those experiences and gain a deeper understanding. In the network of small gestures I tried to keep a balance between words and experiences; each gesture required the engagement of the voice, the ear, the body and the brain.

THE CRITICAL BODY

"An active body learns in ways that are eminently more personal, applicable, critical, and long-lasting than any other teaching method I have tried." (Pineau, 2002, p.52)

Critical Performative Pedagogy (CPP) is a philosophy and practice coined by Elyse Lamm Pineau, that brings together Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Performance Studies. In other words, in CPP, performance becomes a critical methodology through which learners can experience, reflect and act upon issues of social justice. This methodology privileges the body as a medium for experimentation and

learning. The body does not refer only to our physical being, but also to the social and political experiences that shape and guide it.

In each small listening gesture, the performative exercises, that referred to real or imagined experiences, created doubt, emotional response, and reflection. For example, the first gesture culminated in an exercise where the group had to compile short choreographies to express their desired trajectories within different social contexts, that influence their identity. In pairs, they chose to reflect on their moves at an art opening, the neoliberal system, and religion. The dance moves, that they could use, were from the 1990's Playstation game *Parappa the Rapper*, which resulted in a lot of laughs and a relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand, the mapping of their chosen contexts and the negotiation of their moves together with their partner stimulated a reflective process on how they exist and act within these territories.

"As performance heightens our attention to our bodies, it provides a way for breaking down and breaking through the habits we take for granted. Finally, performance enables an imaginative leap into other kinds of bodies, other ways of being in the world, and in doing so, it opens up concrete and embodied possibilities for resistance, reform, and renewal." (Pineau, 2002, p.51) As our bodies in our everyday interactions act both alone and together in various group formations, in the workshops we kept a similar balance between those different types of sociality and collaboration, for instance, working individually, in pairs, and as a group. Looking back and listening to the feedback, I believe, that these shifts in dynamics contributed to creating a context to enable both individual and collective voice.

how do we come together within our small communities?

how can we involve our whole bodies in the process of listening?

vibrating

how can we translate the personal to the social by engaging our ears, our voices, our bodies and our brains?

The small listening gestures with the group of artists, and the group of design students involved an exercise to experience the concept of vibration. Exchanging roles of speakers and listeners, the participants were encouraged to experiment with ways to narrate, listen and intensify vibrations (change body position, pitch of the voice and so on) being aware not to lose their bodily support structure. This audio piece contains documentation from these two workshops.

MAKING THE LEAP: FROM AFFECT TO COGNITION

From my initial projects, welkom in deze buurt and Reading, Listening and Reacting, I had noticed the impact of the personal narratives to the participants' commitment. I remember the excitement of the participants at Leeszaal when after reading an excerpt from G.Perec's *Species, Spaces, and Other Pieces*, they started talking about the towns they grew up in and eagerly shared their experiences. These moments of intimacy acted as ways for building community bonds.

In the network of small listening gestures, depending on the occasion, the community was either asked to send me their contributions beforehand (either a sound or a story) or to contribute something on the spot, as part of an exercise. Sometimes, we had to repeat the same performative exercise using different content, one time, for example, echoing responses from strangers and the other responses from our co-learners. In the second case, people acknowledged being more concentrated and attentive towards the spoken words.

In the workshop at KABK, the texts which the students wrote and echoed about the person, who inspires them, reflected deep personal perceptions of identity and it was the subject, that most of them were eager to discuss during the reflection time in the end. Through sharing our feelings and experience of echoing an identity we look up to, we discussed how we form individual identities and how the process of echoing connects to the desire of belonging to a certain community. In the end, I realized, that the connection with personal experiences and the sharing of their

personal stories, was the key to open up the discourse, to perform the leap from the affect to cognition, to the development of a listening consciousness.

Of course, the discussions and issues that emerged were different for each group and associated with their own individual and collective urgencies. Nevertheless, the time and space for discussion at the end of the workshop was essential for all gestures and communities. It was the site to reflect together on the experiences, to question, to share, to debate, to connect the personal to the social. This reflection was the site to move from individual to collective agency.

Students at KABK working on sound collages to express their desired rhythm of the classroom. Image by Valentina Scaglia.

how can the affect result in cognition?

how do we choose to move within the social contexts we exist?

how can intimacy foster learning?

producing a collective rhythm

how can we move from individual to collective agency through listening?

how can we raise conversations regarding the terms of audibility within our small communities?

This audio piece contains the documentation of the exercise on rhythm in two different gestures, mixed with the sound collages that the students of KABK produced in the context of this exercise. Through an affective an analytical process we examined the social contexts, that we relate to in the everyday, and collaborated on devising new ways to move within them.

WRAPPING UP

My research project began as an urgency to respond to the unequal terms of audibility in our society through artistic and pedagogical strategies. These terms control which and how voices are heard and consequently affect which stories are spread. In that way, they sustain a divided society of the audible and the silent. But these unfair conditions of listening also exist within the small communities, in which we are part of in the everyday. They are disguised as filters, that we apply to what we hear depending on our idea of the identity of the speaking Subject.

Drawing from art, activism, and pedagogy, this research project investigated how we can challenge the way we listen on a micro-political scale. In order to do that, I argued that the first step is to develop our collective listening consciousness. Based on the concept of the critical consciousness by Paulo Freire, a listening consciousness is a state of awareness of the unequal conditions of listening in society. It requires intention, attention, tension and accountability. Thus, I examined how we can create a learning and listening experience that can engage our small everyday communities in developing a listening consciousness.

For this reason, I looked at the work of the sound art and political collective Ultra-Red and specifically their protocols for militant sound investigations, that revolve around the organization of the process of listening. Furthermore, I contemplated on the practice of the Feminist Consciousness Raising Groups in the 1970s and how they achieved within a community of care to translate the personal to the political. Namely, how through a process of talking and listening they managed to connect everyday issues and behaviors to larger social issues and in that way feed their macro-political struggle.

This theoretical framework along with my practical experiments led me to design my educational project, a network of small listening gestures, as a series of four workshops on how we come together and listen within the small communities of the everyday. The network expanded in four different micro-contexts: a group of young artists, a group of after-school teachers, a group of academic peers, and a group of design students and their tutor. Each gesture was based on a workshop, that exists as a living organism, adapts to each community, and evolves through each iteration. Through this workshop, we reflected on who we are, how we listen and how we co-exist in our small community, suggesting other ways of being, listening and learning together.

Reflecting on the course of my research project, I identified the pillars of a small listening gesture and in that way suggested a 'toolkit' for future small listening gestures. In the context of the workshop, this toolkit seeks ways to subvert the traditional relationship between facilitator and participants, reduce hierarchies and amalgamate an affective with an analytical experience. By fostering intimacy and connecting with the personal and collective experiences of the community, it opens up the discourse and gives space and time to collectively assign social and political meaning to the affective experiences. If we consider that listening and being listened to is a condition for agency, then this transformation of a community to a community of conscious listeners could open up future possibilities for individual and collective agency.

The network remains open to include more communities in the future and through care and friction to trigger reflection and doubt on how we listen within them. But at the same time, it raises new questions and calls for further investigations: How could the individuals and the community sustain that doubt and commitment and transform it into action? How could these listening gestures, not simply multiply, but act together? I imagine that such a network could become autonomous when the committed communities of conscious listeners broadcast these seeds for listening in other communities that they relate to. How could we create paths within such a network to communicate and foster solidarity to the struggles for equal audibility? These are questions I will continue to explore envisioning a solidary society of conscious listeners.

Small intimate acts are not enough to cause social change. But, they can become a medium of translation between the personal and the social, or a medium of subversion of the everyday norms of interaction. As small intimate acts, these small gestures are not enough to change society's terms of audibility. But, they can trigger the listening consciousness of a community. And when they multiply and act together, they can generate power, the power of the collective. Phantom power in the end is the invisible power of the collective that is generated when we question how we listen and are listened to.

Sharing stories through bodily vibrations during the first gesture.

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